

DANIEL DERONDA

BY

GEORGE ELIOT

BOOK V.—MORDECAI

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There, 'mid the throng of hurrying desires
That trample o'er the dead to seize their spoil,
Lurks vengeance, footless, irresistible
As exhalations laden with slow death,
And o'er the fairest troop of captured joys
Breathes pallid pestilence.

DANIEL DERONDA

BY

GEORGE ELIOT

VOL. III.

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DANIEL DERONDA

BOOK V.

MORDECAI

BOOK V.

M O R D E C A I.



CHAPTER XXXV.

Were uneasiness of conscience measured by extent of crime, human history had been different, and one should look to see the contrivers of greedy wars and the mighty marauders of the money-market in one troop of self-lacerating penitents with the meaner robber and cut-purse and the murderer that doth his butchery in small with his own hand. No doubt wickedness hath its rewards to distribute; but whoso wins in this devil's game must needs be baser, more cruel, more brutal than the order of this planet will allow for the multitude born of woman, the most of these carrying a form of conscience—a fear which is the shadow of justice, a pity which is the shadow of love—that hindereth from the prize of serene wickedness, itself difficult of maintenance in our composite flesh.

ON the 29th of December Deronda knew that the Grandcourts had arrived at the Abbey, but he had had no glimpse of them before he went to dress for dinner. There had been a splendid fall of snow, allowing the party of children the rare pleasures of snow-balling and snow-building, and

in the Christmas holidays the Mallinger girls were content with no amusement unless it were joined in and managed by "cousin," as they had always called Deronda. After that outdoor exertion he had been playing billiards, and thus the hours had passed without his dwelling at all on the prospect of meeting Gwendolen at dinner. Nevertheless that prospect was interesting to him, and when, a little tired and heated with working at amusement, he went to his room before the half-hour bell had rung, he began to think of it with some speculation on the sort of influence her marriage with Grandcourt would have on her, and on the probability that there would be some discernible shades of change in her manner since he saw her at Diplo, just as there had been since his first vision of her at Leubronn.

"I fancy there are some natures one could see growing or degenerating every day, if one watched them," was his thought. "I suppose some of us go on faster than others; and I am sure she is a creature who keeps strong traces of anything that has once impressed her. That little affair of the necklace, and the idea that somebody thought her gambling wrong, had evidently bitten into her. But such impressibility tells both ways: it may drive one to desperation as soon as to anything

better. And whatever fascinations Grandcourt may have for capricious tastes—good heavens! who can believe that he would call out the tender affections in daily companionship? One might be tempted to horsewhip him for the sake of getting some show of passion into his face and speech. I'm afraid she married him out of ambition—to escape poverty. But why did she run out of his way at first? The poverty came after, though. Poor thing! she may have been urged into it. How can one feel anything else than pity for a young creature like that—full of unused life—ignorantly rash—hanging all her blind expectations on that remnant of a human being!”

Doubtless the phrases which Deronda's meditation applied to the bridegroom were the less complimentary for the excuses and pity in which it clad the bride. His notion of Grandcourt as a “remnant” was founded on no particular knowledge, but simply on the impression which ordinary polite intercourse had given him that Grandcourt had worn out all his natural healthy interest in things.

In general, one may be sure that whenever a marriage of any mark takes place, male acquaintances are likely to pity the bride, female ac-

quaintances the bridegroom: each, it is thought, might have done better; and especially where the bride is charming, young gentlemen on the scene are apt to conclude that she can have no real attachment to a fellow so uninteresting to themselves as her husband, but has married him on other grounds. Who under such circumstances pities the husband? Even his female friends are apt to think his position retributive: he should have chosen some one else. But perhaps Deronda may be excused that he did not prepare any pity for Grandcourt, who had never struck acquaintances as likely to come out of his experiences with more suffering than he inflicted; whereas for Gwendolen, young, headlong, eager for pleasure, fed with the flattery which makes a lovely girl believe in her divine right to rule — how quickly might life turn from expectancy to a bitter sense of the irremediable! After what he had seen of her he must have had rather dull feelings not to have looked forward with some interest to her entrance into the room. Still, since the honeymoon was already three weeks in the distance, and Gwendolen had been enthroned not only at Ryelands but at Diplo, she was likely to have composed her countenance with suitable manifestation or concealment, not being

one who would indulge the curious by a helpless exposure of her feelings.

A various party had been invited to meet the new couple : the old aristocracy was represented by Lord and Lady Pentreath ; the old gentry by young Mr and Mrs Fitzadam of the Worcester-shire branch of the Fitzadams ; politics and the public good, as specialised in the cider interest, by Mr Fenn, member for West Orchards, accompanied by his two daughters ; Lady Mallinger's family, by her brother, Mr Raymond, and his wife ; the useful bachelor element by Mr Sinker, the eminent counsel, and by Mr Vandernoodt, whose acquaintance Sir Hugo had found pleasant enough at Leubronn to be adopted in England.

All had assembled in the drawing-room before the new couple appeared. Meanwhile the time was being passed chiefly in noticing the children—various little Raymonds, nephews and nieces of Lady Mallinger's, with her own three girls, who were always allowed to appear at this hour. The scene was really delightful—enlarged by full-length portraits with deep backgrounds, inserted in the cedar panelling—surmounted by a ceiling that glowed with the rich colours of the coats of arms ranged between the sockets—illuminated almost as much by the red fire of oak-boughs as by the

pale wax-lights—stilled by the deep-piled carpet and by the high English breeding that subdues all voices; while the mixture of ages, from the white-haired Lord and Lady Pentreath to the four-year-old Edgar Raymond, gave a varied charm to the living groups. Lady Mallinger, with fair matronly roundness and mildly prominent blue eyes, moved about in her black velvet, carrying a tiny white dog on her arm as a sort of finish to her costume; the children were scattered among the ladies, while most of the gentlemen were standing rather aloof conversing with that very moderate vivacity observable during the long minutes before dinner. Deronda was a little out of the circle in a dialogue fixed upon him by Mr Vandernoodt, a man of the best Dutch blood imported at the revolution: for the rest, one of those commodious persons in society who are nothing particular themselves, but are understood to be acquainted with the best in every department; close-clipped, pale-eyed, *nonchalant*, as good a foil as could well be found to the intense colouring and vivid gravity of Deronda.

He was talking of the bride and bridegroom, whose appearance was being waited for. Mr Vandernoodt was an industrious gleaner of personal details, and could probably tell everything about

a great philosopher or physicist except his theories or discoveries: he was now implying that he had learned many facts about Grandcourt since meeting him at Leubronn.

“Men who have seen a good deal of life don’t always end by choosing their wives so well. He has had rather an anecdotic history—gone rather deep into pleasures, I fancy, lazy as he is. But, of course, you know all about him.”

“No, really,” said Deronda, in an indifferent tone. “I know little more of him than that he is Sir Hugo’s nephew.”

But now the door opened and deferred any satisfaction of Mr Vandernoodt’s communicativeness.

The scene was one to set off any figure of distinction that entered on it, and certainly when Mr and Mrs Grandcourt entered, no beholder could deny that their figures had distinction. The bridegroom had neither more nor less easy perfection of costume, neither more nor less well-cut impassibility of face, than before his marriage. It was to be supposed of him that he would put up with nothing less than the best in outward equipment, wife included; and the wife on his arm was what he might have been expected to choose. “By George, I think she’s handsomer if

anything!" said Mr Vandernoodt. And Deronda was of the same opinion, but he said nothing. The white silk and diamonds—it may seem strange, but she did wear the diamonds on her neck, in her ears, in her hair—might have something to do with the new imposingness of her beauty, which flashed on him as more unquestionable if not more thoroughly satisfactory than when he had first seen her at the gaming-table. Some faces which are peculiar in their beauty are like original works of art: for the first time they are almost always met with question. But in seeing Gwendolen at Diplow, Deronda had discerned in her more than he had expected of that tender appealing charm which we call womanly. Was there any new change since then? He distrusted his impressions; but as he saw her receiving greetings with what seemed a proud cold quietude and a superficial smile, there seemed to be at work within her the same demonic force that had possessed her when she took him in her resolute glance and turned away a loser from the gaming-table. There was no time for more of a conclusion—no time even for him to give his greeting before the summons to dinner.

He sat not far from opposite to her at table, and could sometimes hear what she said in

answer to Sir Hugo, who was at his liveliest in conversation with her; but though he looked towards her with the intention of bowing, she gave him no opportunity of doing so for some time. At last Sir Hugo, who might have imagined that they had already spoken to each other, said, "Deronda, you will like to hear what Mrs Grandcourt tells me about your favourite Klesmer."

Gwendolen's eyelids had been lowered, and Deronda, already looking at her, thought he discovered a quivering reluctance as she was obliged to raise them and return his unembarrassed bow and smile, her own smile being one of the lip merely. It was but an instant, and Sir Hugo continued without pause—

"The Arrowpoints have condoned the marriage, and he is spending the Christmas with his bride at Quetcham."

"I suppose he will be glad of it for the sake of his wife, else I daresay he would not have minded keeping at a distance," said Deronda.

"It's a sort of troubadour story," said Lady Pentreath, an easy, deep-voiced old lady; "I'm glad to find a little romance left among us. I think our young people now are getting too worldly wise."

"It shows the Arrowpoints' good sense, however, to have adopted the affair, after the fuss in the papers," said Sir Hugo. "And disowning your only child because of a *mésalliance* is something like disowning your one eye: everybody knows it's yours, and you have no other to make an appearance with."

"As to *mésalliance*, there's no blood on any side," said Lady Pentreath. "Old Admiral Arrowpoint was one of Nelson's men, you know—a doctor's son. And we all know how the mother's money came."

"If there were any *mésalliance* in the case, I should say it was on Klesmer's side," said Deronda.

"Ah, you think it is a case of the immortal marrying the mortal. What is your opinion?" said Sir Hugo, looking at Gwendolen.

"I have no doubt that Herr Klesmer thinks himself immortal. But I daresay his wife will burn as much incense before him as he requires," said Gwendolen. She had recovered any composure that she might have lost.

"Don't you approve of a wife burning incense before her husband?" said Sir Hugo, with an air of jocoseness.

"Oh yes," said Gwendolen, "if it were only

to make others believe in him." She paused a moment and then said with more gaiety, "When Herr Klesmer admires his own genius, it will take off some of the absurdity if his wife says Amen."

"Klesmer is no favourite of yours, I see," said Sir Hugo.

"I think very highly of him, I assure you," said Gwendolen. "His genius is quite above my judgment, and I know him to be exceedingly generous."

She spoke with the sudden seriousness which is often meant to correct an unfair or indiscreet sally, having a bitterness against Klesmer in her secret soul which she knew herself unable to justify. Deronda was wondering what he should have thought of her if he had never heard of her before: probably that she put on a little hardness and defiance by way of concealing some painful consciousness—if, indeed, he could imagine her manners otherwise than in the light of his suspicion. But why did she not recognise him with more friendliness?

Sir Hugo, by way of changing the subject, said to her, "Is not this a beautiful room? It was part of the refectory of the Abbey. There was a division made by those pillars and the three

arches, and afterwards they were built up. Else it was half as large again originally. There used to be rows of Benedictines sitting where we are sitting. Suppose we were suddenly to see the lights burning low and the ghosts of the old monks rising behind all our chairs!"

"Please don't!" said Gwendolen, with a playful shudder. "It is very nice to come after ancestors and monks, but they should know their places and keep underground. I should be rather frightened to go about this house all alone. I suppose the old generations must be angry with us because we have altered things so much."

"Oh, the ghosts must be of all political parties," said Sir Hugo. "And those fellows who wanted to change things while they lived and couldn't do it, must be on our side. But if you would not like to go over the house alone, you will like to go in company, I hope. You and Grandcourt ought to see it all. And we will ask Deronda to go round with us. He is more learned about it than I am." The baronet was in the most com-plaisant of humours.

Gwendolen stole a glance at Deronda, who must have heard what Sir Hugo said, for he had his face turned towards them helping himself to an *entrée*; but he looked as impassive as a picture.

At the notion of Deronda's showing her and Grandcourt the place which was to be theirs, and which she with painful emphasis remembered might have been his (perhaps, if others had acted differently), certain thoughts had rushed in—thoughts often repeated within her, but now returning on an occasion embarrassingly new; and she was conscious of something furtive and awkward in her glance, which Sir Hugo must have noticed. With her usual readiness of resource against betrayal, she said playfully, "You don't know how much I am afraid of Mr Deronda."

"How's that? Because you think him too learned?" said Sir Hugo, whom the peculiarity of her glance had not escaped.

"No. It is ever since I first saw him at Leubronn. Because when he came to look on at the roulette-table, I began to lose. He cast an evil eye on my play. He didn't approve it. He has told me so. And now whatever I do before him, I am afraid he will cast an evil eye upon it."

"Gad! I'm rather afraid of him myself when he doesn't approve," said Sir Hugo, glancing at Deronda; and then turning his face towards Gwendolen, he said less audibly, "I don't think ladies generally object to have his eyes upon them."

The baronet's small chronic complaint of facetiousness was at this moment almost as annoying to Gwendolen as it often was to Deronda.

"I object to any eyes that are critical," she said, in a cool high voice, with a turn of her neck. "Are there many of these old rooms left in the Abbey?"

"Not many. There is a fine cloistered court with a long gallery above it. But the finest bit of all is turned into stables. It is part of the old church. When I improved the place I made the most of every other bit; but it was out of my reach to change the stables, so the horses have the benefit of the fine old choir. You must go and see it."

"I shall like to see the horses as well as the building," said Gwendolen.

"Oh, I have no stud to speak of. Grandcourt will look with contempt at my horses," said Sir Hugo. "I've given up hunting, and go on in a jog-trot way, as becomes an old gentleman with daughters. The fact is, I went in for doing too much at this place. We all lived at Diplow for two years while the alterations were going on. Do you like Diplow?"

"Not particularly," said Gwendolen, with indifference. One would have thought that the

young lady had all her life had more family seats than she cared to go to.

“Ah! it will not do after Ryelands,” said Sir Hugo, well pleased. “Grandcourt, I know, took it for the sake of the hunting. But he found something so much better there,” added the baronet, lowering his voice, “that he might well prefer it to any other place in the world.”

“It has one attraction for me,” said Gwendolen, passing over this compliment with a chill smile, “that it is within reach of Offendene.”

“I understand that,” said Sir Hugo, and then let the subject drop.

What amiable baronet can escape the effect of a strong desire for a particular possession? Sir Hugo would have been glad that Grandcourt, with or without reason, should prefer any other place to Diplow; but inasmuch as in the pure process of wishing we can always make the conditions of our gratification benevolent, he did wish that Grandcourt's convenient disgust for Diplow should not be associated with his marriage of this very charming bride. Gwendolen was much to the baronet's taste, but, as he observed afterwards to Lady Mallinger, he should never have taken her for a young girl who had married beyond her expectations.

Deronda had not heard much of this conversation, having given his attention elsewhere, but the glimpses he had of Gwendolen's manner deepened the impression that it had something newly artificial.

Later in the drawing-room, Deronda, at somebody's request, sat down to the piano and sang. Afterwards Mrs Raymond took his place; and on rising he observed that Gwendolen had left her seat, and had come to this end of the room, as if to listen more fully, but was now standing with her back to every one, apparently contemplating a fine cowed head carved in ivory which hung over a small table. He longed to go to her and speak. Why should he not obey such an impulse, as he would have done towards any other lady in the room? Yet he hesitated some moments, observing the graceful lines of her back, but not moving.

If you have any reason for not indulging a wish to speak to a fair woman, it is a bad plan to look long at her back: the wish to see what it screens becomes the stronger. There may be a very sweet smile on the other side. Deronda ended by going to the end of the small table, at right angles to Gwendolen's position, but before he could speak she had turned on him no smile, but such an appealing look of sadness, so utterly

different from the chill effort of her recognition at table, that his speech was checked. For what was an appreciable space of time to both, though the observation of others could not have measured it, they looked at each other—she seeming to take the deep rest of confession, he with an answering depth of sympathy that neutralised other feelings.

“Will you not join in the music?” he said, by way of meeting the necessity for speech.

That her look of confession had been involuntary was shown by that just perceptible shake and change of countenance with which she roused herself to reply calmly, “I join in it by listening. I am fond of music.”

“Are you not a musician?”

“I have given a great deal of time to music. But I have not talent enough to make it worth while. I shall never sing again.”

“But if you are fond of music, it will always be worth while in private, for your own delight. I make it a virtue to be content with my middlingness,” said Deronda, smiling; “it is always pardonable, so that one does not ask others to take it for superiority.”

“I cannot imitate you,” said Gwendolen, recovering her tone of artificial vivacity. “To be

middling with me is another phrase for being dull. And the worst fault I have to find with the world is, that it is dull. Do you know, I am going to justify gambling in spite of you. It is a refuge from dulness."

"I don't admit the justification," said Deronda. "I think what we call the dulness of things is a disease in ourselves. Else how could any one find an intense interest in life? And many do."

"Ah, I see! The fault I find in the world is my own fault," said Gwendolen, smiling at him. Then after a moment, looking up at the ivory again, she said, "Do *you* never find fault with the world or with others?"

"Oh yes. When I am in a grumbling mood."

"And hate people? Confess you hate them when they stand in your way—when their gain is your loss? That is your own phrase, you know."

"We are often standing in each other's way when we can't help it. I think it is stupid to hate people on that ground."

"But if they injure you and could have helped it?" said Gwendolen, with a hard intensity unaccountable in incidental talk like this.

Deronda wondered at her choice of subjects.

A painful impression arrested his answer a moment, but at last he said, with a graver, deeper intonation, "Why then, after all, I prefer my place to theirs."

"There I believe you are right," said Gwendolen, with a sudden little laugh, and turned to join the group at the piano.

Deronda looked round for Grandcourt, wondering whether he followed his bride's movements with any attention; but it was rather undiscerning in him to suppose that he could find out the fact. Grandcourt had a delusive mode of observing whatever had an interest for him, which could be surpassed by no sleepy-eyed animal on the watch for prey. At that moment he was plunged in the depth of an easy-chair, being talked to by Mr Vandernoodt, who apparently thought the acquaintance of such a bridegroom worth cultivating; and an incautious person might have supposed it safe to telegraph secrets in front of him, the common prejudice being that your quick observer is one whose eyes have quick movements. Not at all. If you want a respectable witness who will see nothing inconvenient, choose a vivacious gentleman, very much on the alert, with two eyes wide open, a glass in one of them, and an entire impartiality as to the purpose of

looking. If Grandcourt cared to keep any one under his power he saw them out of the corners of his long narrow eyes, and if they went behind him, he had a constructive process by which he knew what they were doing there. He knew perfectly well where his wife was, and how she was behaving. Was he going to be a jealous husband? Deronda imagined that to be likely; but his imagination was as much astray about Grandcourt as it would have been about an unexplored continent where all the species were peculiar. He did not conceive that he himself was a likely object of jealousy, or that he should give any pretext for it; but the suspicion that a wife is not happy naturally leads one to speculate on the husband's private deportment; and Deronda found himself after one o'clock in the morning in the rather ludicrous position of sitting up severely holding a Hebrew grammar in his hands (for somehow, in deference to Mordecai, he had begun to study Hebrew), with the consciousness that he had been in that attitude nearly an hour, and had thought of nothing but Gwendolen and her husband. To be an unusual young man means for the most part to get a difficult mastery over the usual, which is often like the sprite of ill-luck you pack up your goods to escape from, and see

grinning at you from the top of your luggage-van. The peculiarities of Deronda's nature had been acutely touched by the brief incidents and words which made the history of his intercourse with Gwendolen; and this evening's slight addition had given them an importunate recurrence. It was not vanity—it was ready sympathy that had made him alive to a certain appealingness in her behaviour towards him; and the difficulty with which she had seemed to raise her eyes to bow to him, in the first instance, was to be interpreted now by that unmistakable look of involuntary confidence which she had afterwards turned on him under the consciousness of his approach.

“What is the use of it all?” thought Deronda, as he threw down his grammar, and began to undress. “I can't do anything to help her—nobody can, if she has found out her mistake already. And it seems to me that she has a dreary lack of the ideas that might help her. Strange and piteous to think what a centre of wretchedness a delicate piece of human flesh like that might be, wrapped round with fine raiment, her ears pierced for gems, her head held loftily, her mouth all smiling pretence, the poor soul within her sitting in sick distaste of all things! But what do I know of her? There may be a demon in her to match the

worst husband, for what I can tell. She was clearly an ill-educated, worldly girl : perhaps she is a coquette."

This last reflection, not much believed in, was a self-administered dose of caution, prompted partly by Sir Hugo's much-contemned joking on the subject of flirtation. Deronda resolved not to volunteer any *tête-à-tête* with Gwendolen during the few days of her stay at the Abbey ; and he was capable of keeping a resolve in spite of much inclination to the contrary.

But a man cannot resolve about a woman's actions, least of all about those of a woman like Gwendolen, in whose nature there was a combination of proud reserve with rashness, of perilously-poised terror with defiance, which might alternately flatter and disappoint control. Few words could less represent her than "coquette." She had a native love of homage, and belief in her own power ; but no cold artifice for the sake of enslaving. And the poor thing's belief in her power, with her other dreams before marriage, had often to be thrust aside now like the toys of a sick child, which it looks at with dull eyes, and has no heart to play with, however it may try.

The next day at lunch Sir Hugo said to her, "The thaw has gone on like magic, and it's so

pleasant out of doors just now—shall we go and see the stables and the other old bits about the place?”

“Yes, pray,” said Gwendolen. “You will like to see the stables, Henleigh?” she added, looking at her husband.

“Uncommonly,” said Grandcourt, with an indifference which seemed to give irony to the word, as he returned her look. It was the first time Deronda had seen them speak to each other since their arrival, and he thought their exchange of looks as cold and official as if it had been a ceremony to keep up a charter. Still, the English fondness for reserve will account for much negation; and Grandcourt’s manners with an extra veil of reserve over them might be expected to present the extreme type of the national taste.

“Who else is inclined to make the tour of the house and premises?” said Sir Hugo. “The ladies must muffle themselves: there is only just about time to do it well before sunset. You will go, Dan, won’t you?”

“Oh yes,” said Deronda, carelessly, knowing that Sir Hugo would think any excuse disobliging.

“All meet in the library, then, when they are ready—say in half an hour,” said the baronet. Gwendolen made herself ready with wonderful

quickness, and in ten minutes came down into the library in her sables, plume, and little thick boots. As soon as she entered the room she was aware that some one else was there: it was precisely what she had hoped for. Deronda was standing with his back towards her at the far end of the room, and was looking over a newspaper. How could little thick boots make any noise on an Axminster carpet? And to cough would have seemed an intended signalling which her pride could not condescend to; also, she felt bashful about walking up to him and letting him know that she was there, though it was her hunger to speak to him which had set her imagination on constructing this chance of finding him, and had made her hurry down, as birds hover near the water which they dare not drink. Always uneasily dubious about his opinion of her, she felt a peculiar anxiety to-day, lest he might think of her with contempt, as one triumphantly conscious of being Grandcourt's wife, the future lady of this domain. It was her habitual effort now to magnify the satisfactions of her pride, on which she nourished her strength; but somehow Deronda's being there disturbed them all. There was not the faintest touch of coquetry in the attitude of her mind towards him: he was unique to her

among men, because he had impressed her as being not her admirer but her superior: in some mysterious way he was becoming a part of her conscience, as one woman whose nature is an object of reverential belief may become a new conscience to a man.

And now he would not look round and find out that she was there! The paper crackled in his hand, his head rose and sank, exploring those stupid columns, and he was evidently stroking his beard, as if this world were a very easy affair to her. Of course all the rest of the company would soon be down, and the opportunity of her saying something to efface her flippancy of the evening before, would be quite gone. She felt sick with irritation—so fast do young creatures like her absorb misery through invisible suckers of their own fancies—and her face had gathered that peculiar expression which comes with a mortification to which tears are forbidden.

At last he threw down the paper and turned round.

“Oh, you are there already,” he said, coming forward a step or two; “I must go and put on my coat.”

He turned aside and walked out of the room. This was behaving quite badly. Mere politeness

would have made him stay to exchange some words before leaving her alone. It was true, that Grandcourt came in with Sir Hugo immediately after, so that the words must have been too few to be worth anything. As it was, they saw him walking from the library door.

"A—you look rather ill," said Grandcourt, going straight up to her, standing in front of her, and looking into her eyes. "Do you feel equal to the walk?"

"Yes, I shall like it," said Gwendolen, without the slightest movement except this of the lips.

"We could put off going over the house, you know, and only go out of doors," said Sir Hugo, kindly, while Grandcourt turned aside.

"Oh dear no!" said Gwendolen, speaking with determination; "let us put off nothing. I want a long walk."

The rest of the walking party—two ladies and two gentlemen besides Deronda—had now assembled; and Gwendolen, rallying, went with due cheerfulness by the side of Sir Hugo, paying apparently an equal attention to the commentaries Deronda was called upon to give on the various architectural fragments, and to Sir Hugo's reasons for not attempting to remedy the mixture of the undisguised modern with the antique—which in

his opinion only made the place the more truly historical. On their way to the buttery and kitchen, they took the outside of the house and paused before a beautiful pointed doorway, which was the only old remnant in the east front.

“Well, now, to my mind,” said Sir Hugo, “that is more interesting standing as it is in the middle of what is frankly four centuries later, than if the whole front had been dressed up in a pretence of the thirteenth century. Additions ought to smack of the time when they are made and carry the stamp of their period. I wouldn’t destroy any old bits, but that notion of reproducing the old is a mistake, I think. At least, if a man likes to do it he must pay for his whistle. Besides, where are you to stop along that road—making loopholes where you don’t want to peep, and so on? You may as well ask me to wear out the stones with kneeling; eh, Grandcourt?”

“A confounded nuisance,” drawled Grandcourt. “I hate fellows wanting to howl litanies—acting the greatest bores that have ever existed.”

“Well, yes, that’s what their romanticism must come to,” said Sir Hugo, in a tone of confidential assent—“that is, if they carry it out logically.”

“I think that way of arguing against a course because it may be ridden down to an absurdity

would soon bring life to a standstill," said Deronda. "It is not the logic of human action, but of a roasting-jack, that must go on to the last turn when it has been once wound up. We can do nothing safely without some judgment as to where we are to stop."

"I find the rule of the pocket the best guide," said Sir Hugo, laughingly. "And as for most of your new-old building, you had need hire men to scratch and chip it all over artistically to give it an elderly-looking surface; which at the present rate of labour would not answer."

"Do you want to keep up the old fashions, then, Mr Deronda?" said Gwendolen, taking advantage of the freedom of grouping to fall back a little, while Sir Hugo and Grandcourt went on.

"Some of them. I don't see why we should not use our choice there as we do elsewhere—or why either age or novelty by itself is an argument for or against. To delight in doing things because our fathers did them is good if it shuts out nothing better; it enlarges the range of affection—and affection is the broadest basis of good in life."

"Do you think so?" said Gwendolen, with a little surprise. "I should have thought you cared most about ideas, knowledge, wisdom, and all that."

“But to care about *them* is a sort of affection,” said Deronda, smiling at her sudden *naïveté*. “Call it attachment, interest, willingness to bear a great deal for the sake of being with them and saving them from injury. Of course it makes a difference if the objects of interest are human beings; but generally in all deep affections the objects are a mixture—half persons and half ideas—sentiments and affections flow in together.”

“I wonder whether I understand that,” said Gwendolen, putting up her chin in her old saucy manner. “I believe I am not very affectionate; perhaps you mean to tell me, that is the reason why I don’t see much good in life.”

“No, I did *not* mean to tell you that; but I admit that I should think it true if I believed what you say of yourself,” said Deronda, gravely.

Here Sir Hugo and Grandcourt turned round and paused.

“I never can get Mr Deronda to pay me a compliment,” said Gwendolen. “I have quite a curiosity to see whether a little flattery can be extracted from him.”

“Ah!” said Sir Hugo, glancing at Deronda, “the fact is, it is hopeless to flatter a bride. We give it up in despair. She has been so fed on

sweet speeches that everything we say seems tasteless."

"Quite true," said Gwendolen, bending her head and smiling. "Mr Grandcourt won me by neatly-turned compliments. If there had been one word out of place it would have been fatal."

"Do you hear that?" said Sir Hugo, looking at the husband.

"Yes," said Grandcourt, without change of countenance. "It is a deucedly hard thing to keep up, though."

All this seemed to Sir Hugo a natural playfulness between such a husband and wife; but Deronda wondered at the misleading alternations in Gwendolen's manner, which at one moment seemed to invite sympathy by childlike indiscretion, at another to repel it by proud concealment. He tried to keep out of her way by devoting himself to Miss Juliet Fenn, a young lady whose profile had been so unfavourably decided by circumstances over which she had no control, that Gwendolen some months ago had felt it impossible to be jealous of her. Nevertheless when they were seeing the kitchen—a part of the original building in perfect preservation—the depth of shadow in the niches of the stone walls and groined vault, the play of light from the huge glowing fire

on polished tin, brass, and copper, the fine resonance that came with every sound of voice or metal, were all spoiled for Gwendolen, and Sir Hugo's speech about them was made rather importunate, because Deronda was discoursing to the other ladies and kept at a distance from her. It did not signify that the other gentlemen took the opportunity of being near her: of what use in the world was their admiration while she had an uneasy sense that there was some standard in Deronda's mind which measured her into littleness? Mr Vandernoodt, who had the mania of always describing one thing while you were looking at another, was quite intolerable with his insistence on Lord Blough's kitchen, which he had seen in the north.

"Pray don't ask us to see two kitchens at once. It makes the heat double. I must really go out of it," she cried at last, marching resolutely into the open air, and leaving the others in the rear. Grandcourt was already out, and as she joined him, he said—

"I wondered how long you meant to stay in that damned place"—one of the freedoms he had assumed as a husband being the use of his strongest epithets. Gwendolen, turning to see the rest of the party approach, said—

“It was certainly rather too warm in one’s wraps.”

They walked on the gravel across a green court, where the snow still lay in islets on the grass, and in masses on the boughs of the great cedar and the crenelated coping of the stone walls, and then into a larger court, where there was another cedar, to find the beautiful choir long ago turned into stables, in the first instance perhaps after an impromptu fashion by troopers, who had a pious satisfaction in insulting the priests of Baal and the images of Ashtaroth, the queen of heaven. The exterior—its west end, save for the stable door, walled in with brick and covered with ivy—was much defaced, maimed of finial and gargoyle, the friable limestone broken and fretted, and lending its soft grey to a powdery dark lichen; the long windows, too, were filled in with brick as far as the springing of the arches, the broad clerestory windows with wire or ventilating blinds. With the low wintry afternoon sun upon it, sending shadows from the cedar boughs, and lighting up the touches of snow remaining on every ledge, it had still a scarcely disturbed aspect of antique solemnity, which gave the scene in the interior rather a startling effect; though, ecclesiastical or reverential indignation apart, the

eyes could hardly help dwelling with pleasure on its piquant picturesqueness. Each finely-arched chapel was turned into a stall, where in the dusty glazing of the windows there still gleamed patches of crimson, orange, blue, and palest violet; for the rest, the choir had been gutted, the floor levelled, paved, and drained according to the most approved fashion, and a line of loose-boxes erected in the middle: a soft light fell from the upper windows on sleek brown or grey flanks and haunches; on mild equine faces looking out with active nostrils over the varnished brown boarding; on the hay hanging from racks where the saints once looked down from the altar-pieces, and on the pale-golden straw scattered or in heaps; on a little white - and - liver - coloured spaniel making his bed on the back of an elderly hackney, and on four ancient angels, still showing signs of devotion like mutilated martyrs—while over all, the grand pointed roof, untouched by reforming wash, showed its lines and colours mysteriously through veiling shadow and cobweb, and a hoof now and then striking against the boards seemed to fill the vault with thunder, while outside there was the answering bay of the blood-hounds.

“Oh, this is glorious!” Gwendolen burst forth,

in forgetfulness of everything but the immediate impression: there had been a little intoxication for her in the grand spaces of courts and building, and the fact of her being an important person among them. "This *is* glorious! Only I wish there were a horse in every one of the boxes. I would ten times rather have these stables than those at Ryelands."

But she had no sooner said this than some consciousness arrested her, and involuntarily she turned her eyes towards Deronda, who oddly enough had taken off his felt hat and stood holding it before him as if they had entered a room or an actual church. He, like others, happened to be looking at her, and their eyes met—to her intense vexation, for it seemed to her that by looking at him she had betrayed the reference of her thoughts, and she felt herself blushing: she exaggerated the impression that even Sir Hugo as well as Deronda would have of her bad taste in referring to the possession of anything at the Abbey: as for Deronda, she had probably made him despise her. Her annoyance at what she imagined to be the obviousness of her confusion robbed her of her usual facility in carrying it off by playful speech, and turning up her face to look at the roof, she wheeled away in that

attitude. If any had noticed her blush as significant, they had certainly not interpreted it by the secret windings and recesses of her feeling. A blush is no language: only a dubious flag-signal which may mean either of two contradictories. Deronda alone had a faint guess at some part of her feeling; but while he was observing her he was himself under observation.

“Do you take off your hat to the horses?” said Grandcourt, with a slight sneer.

“Why not?” said Deronda, covering himself. He had really taken off the hat automatically, and if he had been an ugly man might doubtless have done so with impunity: ugliness having naturally the air of involuntary exposure, and beauty, of display.

Gwendolen’s confusion was soon merged in the survey of the horses, which Grandcourt politely abstained from appraising, languidly assenting to Sir Hugo’s alternate depreciation and eulogy of the same animal, as one that he should not have bought when he was younger, and piqued himself on his horses, but yet one that had better qualities than many more expensive brutes.

“The fact is, stables dive deeper and deeper into the pocket nowadays, and I am very glad to

have got rid of that *démangeaison*," said Sir Hugo, as they were coming out.

"What is a man to do, though?" said Grandcourt. "He must ride. I don't see what else there is to do. And I don't call it riding to sit astride a set of brutes with every deformity under the sun."

This delicate diplomatic way of characterising Sir Hugo's stud did not require direct notice; and the baronet feeling that the conversation had worn rather thin, said to the party generally, "Now we are going to see the cloister—the finest bit of all—in perfect preservation: the monks might have been walking there yesterday."

But Gwendolen had lingered behind to look at the kennelled blood-hounds, perhaps because she felt a little dispirited; and Grandcourt waited for her.

"You had better take my arm," he said, in his low tone of command; and she took it.

"It's a great bore being dragged about in this way, and no cigar," said Grandcourt.

"I thought you would like it."

"Like it?—one eternal chatter. And encouraging those ugly girls—inviting one to meet such monsters. How that *fat* Deronda can bear looking at her——"

“Why do you call him a *fat*? Do you object to him so much?”

“Object? no. What do I care about his being a *fat*? It’s of no consequence to me. I’ll invite him to Diplow again if you like.”

“I don’t think he would come. He is too clever and learned to care about *us*,” said Gwendolen, thinking it useful for her husband to be told (privately) that it was possible for him to be looked down upon.

“I never saw that make much difference in a man. Either he is a gentleman, or he is not,” said Grandcourt.

That a new husband and wife should snatch a moment’s *tête-à-tête* was what could be understood and indulged; and the rest of the party left them in the rear till, re-entering the garden, they all paused in that cloistered court where, among the falling rose-petals thirteen years before, we saw a boy becoming acquainted with his first sorrow. This cloister was built of harder stone than the church, and had been in greater safety from the wearing weather. It was a rare example of a northern cloister with arched and pillared openings not intended for glazing, and the delicately-wrought foliage of the capitals seemed still to carry the very touches of the

chisel. Gwendolen had dropped her husband's arm and joined the other ladies, to whom Deronda was noticing the delicate sense which had combined freedom with accuracy in the imitation of natural forms.

"I wonder whether one oftener learns to love real objects through their representations, or the representations through the real objects," he said, after pointing out a lovely capital made by the curled leaves of greens, showing their reticulated under-side with the firm gradual swell of its central rib. "When I was a little fellow these capitals taught me to observe, and delight in, the structure of leaves."

"I suppose you can see every line of them with your eyes shut," said Juliet Fenn.

"Yes. I was always repeating them, because for a good many years this court stood for me as my only image of a convent, and whenever I read of monks and monasteries, this was my scenery for them." *

"You must love this place very much," said Miss Fenn, innocently, not thinking of inheritance. "So many homes are like twenty others. But this is unique, and you seem to know every cranny of it. I daresay you could never love another home so well."

“Oh, I carry it with me,” said Deronda, quietly, being used to all possible thoughts of this kind. “To most men their early home is no more than a memory of their early years, and I’m not sure but they have the best of it. The image is never marred. There’s no disappointment in memory, and one’s exaggerations are always on the good side.”

Gwendolen felt sure that he spoke in that way out of delicacy to her and Grandcourt—because he knew they must hear him; and that he probably thought of her as a selfish creature who only cared about possessing things in her own person. But whatever he might say, it must have been a secret hardship to him that any circumstances of his birth had shut him out from the inheritance of his father’s position; and if he supposed that she exulted in her husband’s taking it, what could he feel for her but scornful pity? Indeed it seemed clear to her that he was avoiding her, and preferred talking to others—which nevertheless was not kind in him.

With these thoughts in her mind she was prevented by a mixture of pride and timidity from addressing him again, and when they were looking at the rows of quaint portraits in the gallery above the cloisters, she kept up her air of interest

and made her vivacious remarks without any direct appeal to Deronda. But at the end she was very weary of her assumed spirits, and as Grandcourt turned into the billiard-room, she went to the pretty boudoir which had been assigned to her, and shut herself up to look melancholy at her ease. No chemical process shows a more wonderful activity than the transforming influence of the thoughts we imagine to be going on in another. Changes in theory, religion, admirations, may begin with a suspicion of dissent or disapproval, even when the grounds of disapproval are but matter of searching conjecture.

Poor Gwendolen was conscious of an uneasy, transforming process—all the old nature shaken to its depths, its hopes spoiled, its pleasures perturbed, but still showing wholeness and strength in the will to reassert itself. After every new shock of humiliation she tried to adjust herself and seize her old supports—proud concealment, trust in new excitements that would make life go by without much thinking; trust in some deed of reparation to nullify her self-blame and shield her from a vague, ever-visiting dread of some horrible calamity; trust in the hardening effect of use and wont that would make her indifferent to her miseries.

Yes—miserics. This beautiful, healthy young creature, with her two-and-twenty years and her gratified ambition, no longer felt inclined to kiss her fortunate image in the glass ; she looked at it with wonder that she could be so miserable. One belief which had accompanied her through her unmarried life as a self-cajoling superstition, encouraged by the subordination of every one about her—the belief in her own power of dominating—was utterly gone. Already, in seven short weeks, which seemed half her life, her husband had gained a mastery which she could no more resist than she could have resisted the benumbing effect from the touch of a torpedo. Gwendolen's will had seemed imperious in its small girlish sway ; but it was the will of a creature with a large discourse of imaginative fears : a shadow would have been enough to relax its hold. And she had found a will like that of a crab or a boa-constrictor which goes on pinching or crushing without alarm at thunder. Not that Grandcourt was without calculation of the intangible effects which were the chief means of mastery ; indeed he had a surprising acuteness in detecting that situation of feeling in Gwendolen which made her proud and rebellious spirit dumb and helpless before him.

She had burnt Lydia Glasher's letter with an

instantaneous terror lest other eyes should see it, and had tenaciously concealed from Grandcourt that there was any other cause of her violent hysterics than the excitement and fatigue of the day: she had been urged into an implied falsehood. "Don't ask me—it was my feeling about everything—it was the sudden change from home." The words of that letter kept repeating themselves, and hung on her consciousness with the weight of a prophetic doom. "I am the grave in which your chance of happiness is buried as well as mine. You had your warning. You have chosen to injure me and my children. He had meant to marry me. He would have married me at last, if you had not broken your word. You will have your punishment. I desire it with all my soul. Will you give him this letter to set him against me and ruin us more—me and my children? Shall you like to stand before your husband with these diamonds on you, and these words of mine in his thoughts and yours? Will he think you have any right to complain when he has made you miserable? You took him with your eyes open. The willing wrong you have done me will be your curse."

The words had nestled their venomous life within her, and stirred continually the vision of

the scene at the Whispering Stones. That scene was now like an accusing apparition : she dreaded that Grandcourt should know of it—so far out of her sight now was that possibility she had once satisfied herself with, of speaking to him about Mrs Glasher and her children, and making them rich amends. Any endurance seemed easier than the mortal humiliation of confessing that she knew all before she married him, and in marrying him had broken her word. For the reasons by which she had justified herself when the marriage tempted her, and all her easy arrangement of her future power over her husband to make him do better than he might be inclined to do, were now as futile as the burnt-out lights which set off a child's pageant. Her sense of being blameworthy was exaggerated by a dread both definite and vague. The definite dread was lest the veil of secrecy should fall between her and Grandcourt, and give him the right to taunt her. With the reading of that letter had begun her husband's empire of fear.

And her husband all the while knew it. He had not, indeed, any distinct knowledge of her broken promise, and would not have rated highly the effect of that breach on her conscience ; but he was aware not only of what Lush had told him

about the meeting at the Whispering Stones, but also of Gwendolen's concealment as to the cause of her sudden illness. He felt sure that Lydia had enclosed something with the diamonds, and that this something, whatever it was, had at once created in Gwendolen a new repulsion for him and a reason for not daring to manifest it. He did not greatly mind, or feel as many men might have felt, that his hopes in marriage were blighted: he had wanted to marry Gwendolen, and he was not a man to repent. Why should a gentleman whose other relations in life are carried on without the luxury of sympathetic feeling, be supposed to require that kind of condiment in domestic life? What he chiefly felt was that a change had come over the conditions of his mastery, which, far from shaking it, might establish it the more thoroughly. And it was established. He judged that he had not married a simpleton unable to perceive the impossibility of escape, or to see alternative evils: he had married a girl who had spirit and pride enough not to make a fool of herself by forfeiting all the advantages of a position which had attracted her; and if she wanted pregnant hints to help her in making up her mind properly, he would take care not to withhold them.

Gwendolen, indeed, with all that gnawing trouble in her consciousness, had hardly for a moment dropped the sense that it was her part to bear herself with dignity, and appear what is called happy. In disclosure of disappointment or sorrow she saw nothing but a humiliation which would have been vinegar to her wounds. Whatever her husband might come at last to be to her, she meant to wear the yoke so as not to be pitied. For she did think of the coming years with presentiment: she was frightened at Grandcourt. The poor thing had passed from her girlish sauciness of superiority over this inert specimen of personal distinction into an amazed perception of her former ignorance about the possible mental attitude of a man towards the woman he sought in marriage—of her present ignorance as to what their life with each other might turn into. For novelty gives immeasurableness to fear, and fills the early time of all sad changes with phantoms of the future. Her little coquetries, voluntary or involuntary, had told on Grandcourt during courtship, and formed a medium of communication between them, showing him in the light of a creature such as she could understand and manage: but marriage had nullified all such interchange, and Grandcourt had become a blank

uncertainty to her in everything but this, that he would do just what he willed, and that she had neither devices at her command to determine his will, nor any rational means of escaping it.

What had occurred between them about her wearing the diamonds was typical. One evening, shortly before they came to the Abbey, they were going to dine at Brackenshaw Castle. Gwendolen had said to herself that she would never wear those diamonds: they had horrible words clinging and crawling about them, as from some bad dream, whose images lingered on the perturbed sense. She came down dressed in her white, with only a streak of gold and a pendant of emeralds, which Grandcourt had given her, round her neck, and little emerald stars in her ears.

Grandcourt stood with his back to the fire and looked at her as she entered.

"Am I altogether as you like?" she said, speaking rather gaily. She was not without enjoyment in this occasion of going to Brackenshaw Castle with her new dignities upon her, as men whose affairs are sadly involved will enjoy dining out among persons likely to be under a pleasant mistake about them.

"No," said Grandcourt.

Gwendolen felt suddenly uncomfortable, won-

dering what was to come. She was not unprepared for some struggle about the diamonds; but suppose he were going to say, in low contemptuous tones, "You are not in any way what I like." It was very bad for her to be secretly hating him; but it would be much worse when he gave the first sign of hating her.

"Oh, mercy!" she exclaimed, the pause lasting till she could bear it no longer. "How am I to alter myself?"

"Put on the diamonds," said Grandcourt, looking straight at her with his narrow glance.

Gwendolen paused in her turn, afraid of showing any emotion, and feeling that nevertheless there was some change in her eyes as they met his. But she was obliged to answer, and said as indifferently as she could, "Oh, please not. I don't think diamonds suit me."

"What you think has nothing to do with it," said Grandcourt, his *sotto voce* imperiousness seeming to have an evening quietude and finish, like his toilet. "I wish you to wear the diamonds."

"Pray excuse me; I like these emeralds," said Gwendolen, frightened in spite of her preparation. That white hand of his which was touching his whisker was capable, she fancied, of clinging round her neck and threatening to throttle her; for her

fear of him, mingling with the vague foreboding of some retributive calamity which hung about her life, had reached a superstitious point.

“Oblige me by telling me your reason for not wearing the diamonds when I desire it,” said Grandcourt. His eyes were still fixed upon her, and she felt her own eyes narrowing under them as if to shut out an entering pain.

Of what use was the rebellion within her? She could say nothing that would not hurt her worse than submission. Turning slowly and covering herself again, she went to her dressing-room. As she reached out the diamonds it occurred to her that her unwillingness to wear them might have already raised a suspicion in Grandcourt that she had some knowledge about them which he had not given her. She fancied that his eyes showed a delight in torturing her. How could she be defiant? She had nothing to say that would touch him—nothing but what would give him a more painful grasp on her consciousness.

“He delights in making the dogs and horses quail: that is half his pleasure in calling them his,” she said to herself, as she opened the jewel-case with a shivering sensation. “It will come to be so with me; and I shall quail. What else

is there for me? I will not say to the world, 'Pity me.'"

She was about to ring for her maid when she heard the door open behind her. It was Grandcourt who came in.

"You want some one to fasten them," he said, coming towards her.

She did not answer, but simply stood still, leaving him to take out the ornaments and fasten them as he would. Doubtless he had been used to fasten them on some one else. With a bitter sort of sarcasm against herself, Gwendolen thought, "What a privilege this is, to have robbed another woman of!"

"What makes you so cold?" said Grandcourt, when he had fastened the last ear-ring. "Pray put plenty of furs on. I hate to see a woman come into a room looking frozen. If you are to appear as a bride at all, appear decently."

This marital speech was not exactly persuasive, but it touched the quick of Gwendolen's pride and forced her to rally. The words of the bad dream crawled about the diamonds still, but only for her: to others they were brilliants that suited her perfectly, and Grandcourt inwardly observed that she answered to the rein.

"Oh yes, mamma, quite happy," Gwendolen had

said on her return to Diplow. "Not at all disappointed in Ryelands. It is a much finer place than this—larger in every way. But don't you want some more money?"

"Did you not know that Mr Grandcourt left me a letter on your wedding-day? I am to have eight hundred a-year. He wishes me to keep Offendene for the present, while you are at Diplow. But if there were some pretty cottage near the park at Ryelands we might live there without much expense, and I should have you most of the year, perhaps."

"We must leave that to Mr Grandcourt, mamma."

"Oh, certainly. It is exceedingly handsome of him to say that he will pay the rent for Offendene till June. And we can go on very well—without any man-servant except Crane, just for out of doors. Our good Merry will stay with us and help me to manage everything. It is natural that Mr Grandcourt should wish me to live in a good style of house in your neighbourhood, and I cannot decline. So he said nothing about it to you?"

"No; he wished me to hear it from you, I suppose."

Gwendolen in fact had been very anxious to

have some definite knowledge of what would be done for her mother, but at no moment since her marriage had she been able to overcome the difficulty of mentioning the subject to Grandcourt. Now, however, she had a sense of obligation which would not let her rest without saying to him, "It is very good of you to provide for mamma. You took a great deal on yourself in marrying a girl who had nothing but relations belonging to her."

Grandcourt was smoking, and only said carelessly, "Of course I was not going to let her live like a gamekeeper's mother."

"At least he is not mean about money," thought Gwendolen, "and mamma is the better off for my marriage."

She often pursued the comparison between what might have been, if she had not married Grandcourt, and what actually was, trying to persuade herself that life generally was barren of satisfaction, and that if she had chosen differently she might now have been looking back with a regret as bitter as the feeling she was trying to argue away. Her mother's dulness, which used to irritate her, she was at present inclined to explain as the ordinary result of women's experience. True, she still saw that she would "manage differ-

ently from mamma ;” but her management now only meant that she would carry her troubles with spirit, and let none suspect them. By-and-by she promised herself that she should get used to her heart-sores, and find excitements that would carry her through life, as a hard gallop carried her through some of the morning hours. There was gambling : she had heard stories at Leubronn of fashionable women who gambled in all sorts of ways. It seemed very flat to her at this distance, but perhaps if she began to gamble again, the passion might awake. Then there was the pleasure of producing an effect by her appearance in society : what did celebrated beauties do in town when their husbands could afford display ? All men were fascinated by them : they had a perfect equipage and toilet, walked into public places, and bowed, and made the usual answers, and walked out again : perhaps they bought china, and practised accomplishments. If she could only feel a keen appetite for those pleasures—could only believe in pleasure as she used to do ! Accomplishments had ceased to have the exciting quality of promising any pre-eminence to her ; and as for fascinated gentlemen—adorers who might hover round her with languishment, and diversify married life with the romantic stir of mystery, passion,

and danger which her French reading had given her some girlish notion of—they presented themselves to her imagination with the fatal circumstance that, instead of fascinating her in return, they were clad in her own weariness and disgust. The admiring male, rashly adjusting the expression of his features and the turn of his conversation to her supposed tastes, had always been an absurd object to her, and at present seemed rather detestable. Many courses are actually pursued—follies and sins both convenient and inconvenient—without pleasure or hope of pleasure; but to solace ourselves with imagining any course beforehand, there must be some foretaste of pleasure in the shape of appetite; and Gwendolen's appetite had sickened. Let her wander over the possibilities of her life as she would, an uncertain shadow dogged her. Her confidence in herself and her destiny had turned into remorse and dread; she trusted neither herself nor her future.

This hidden helplessness gave fresh force to the hold Deronda had from the first taken on her mind, as one who had an unknown standard by which he judged her. Had he some way of looking at things which might be a new footing for her—an inward safeguard against possible events which she dreaded as stored-up retribution? It is

one of the secrets in that change of mental poise which has been fitly named conversion, that to many among us neither heaven nor earth has any revelation till some personality touches theirs with a peculiar influence, subduing them into receptiveness. It had been Gwendolen's habit to think of the persons around her as stale books, too familiar to be interesting. Deronda had lit up her attention with a sense of novelty: not by words only, but by imagined facts, his influence had entered into the current of that self-suspicion and self-blame which awakens a new consciousness.

"I wish he could know everything about me without my telling him," was one of her thoughts, as she sat leaning over the end of a couch, supporting her head with her hand, and looking at herself in a mirror—not in admiration, but in a sad kind of companionship. "I wish he knew that I am not so contemptible as he thinks me—that I am in deep trouble, and want to be something better if I could." Without the aid of sacred ceremony or costume, her feelings had turned this man, only a few years older than herself, into a priest; a sort of trust less rare than the fidelity that guards it. Young reverence for one who is also young is the most coercive of all: there is the same level of temptation, and the higher

motive is believed in as a fuller force—not suspected to be a mere residue from weary experience.

But the coercion is often stronger on the one who takes the reverence. Those who trust us educate us. And perhaps in that ideal consecration of Gwendolen's, some education was being prepared for Deronda.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"Rien ne pèse tant qu'un secret,
 Le porter loin est difficile aux dames :
 Et je sçais mesme sur ce fait
 Bon nombre d'hommes qui sont femmes "

—LA FONTAINE.

MEANWHILE Deronda had been fastened and led off by Mr Vandernoodt, who wished for a brisker walk, a cigar, and a little gossip. Since we cannot tell a man his own secrets, the restraint of being in his company often breeds a desire to pair off in conversation with some more ignorant person, and Mr Vandernoodt presently said—

“What a washed-out piece of cambric Grandcourt is ! But if he is a favourite of yours, I withdraw the remark.”

“Not the least in the world,” said Deronda.

“I thought not. One wonders how he came to have a great passion again ; and he must have had—to marry in this way. Though Lush, his old chum, hints that he married this girl out of

obstinacy. By George! it was a very accountable obstinacy. A man might make up his mind to marry her without the stimulus of contradiction. But he must have made himself a pretty large drain of money, eh?"

"I know nothing of his affairs."

"What! not of the other establishment he keeps up?"

"Diplow? Of course. He took that of Sir Hugo. But merely for the year."

"No, no: not Diplow: Gadsmere. Sir Hugo knows, I'll answer for it."

Deronda said nothing. He really began to feel some curiosity, but he foresaw that he should hear what Mr Vandernoodt had to tell, without the condescension of asking.

"Lush would not altogether own to it, of course. He's a confidant and go-between of Grandcourt's. But I have it on the best authority. The fact is, there's another lady with four children at Gadsmere. She has had the upper hand of him these ten years and more, and by what I can understand has it still—left her husband for him, and used to travel with him everywhere. Her husband's dead now: I found a fellow who was in the same regiment with him, and knew this Mrs Glasher before she took wing. A fiery dark-eyed

woman—a noted beauty at that time—he thought she was dead. They say she has Grandcourt under her thumb still, and it's a wonder he didn't marry her, for there's a very fine boy, and I understand Grandcourt can do absolutely as he pleases with the estates. Lush told me as much as that."

"What right had he to marry this girl?" said Deronda, with disgust.

Mr Vandernoodt, adjusting the end of his cigar, shrugged his shoulders and put out his lips.

"*She* can know nothing of it," said Deronda, emphatically. But that positive statement was immediately followed by an inward query—"Could she have known anything of it?"

"It's rather a piquant picture," said Mr Vandernoodt—"Grandcourt between two fiery women. For depend upon it this light-haired one has plenty of devil in her. I formed that opinion of her at Leubronn. It's a sort of Medea and Creüsa business. Fancy the two meeting! Grandcourt is a new kind of Jason: I wonder what sort of a part he'll make of it. It's a dog's part at best. I think I hear Ristori now, saying, 'Jasone! Jasone!' These fine women generally get hold of a stick."

“Grandcourt can bite, I fancy,” said Deronda.
“He is no stick.”

“No, no ; I meant Jason. I can’t quite make out Grandcourt. But he’s a keen fellow enough—uncommonly well built too. And if he comes into all this property, the estates will bear dividing. This girl, whose friends had come to beggary, I understand, may think herself lucky to get him. I don’t want to be hard on a man because he gets involved in an affair of that sort. But he might make himself more agreeable. I was telling him a capital story last night, and he got up and walked away in the middle. I felt inclined to kick him. Do you suppose that is inattention or insolence, now ?”

“Oh, a mixture. He generally observes the forms ; but he doesn’t listen much,” said Deronda. Then, after a moment’s pause, he went on, “I should think there must be some exaggeration or inaccuracy in what you have heard about this lady at Gadsmere.”

“Not a bit, depend upon it ; it has all lain snug of late years. People have forgotten all about it. But there the nest is, and the birds are in it. And I know Grandcourt goes there. I have good evidence that he goes there. However,

that's nobody's business but his own. The affair has sunk below the surface."

"I wonder you could have learned so much about it," said Deronda, rather drily.

"Oh, there are plenty of people who knew all about it; but such stories get packed away like old letters. They interest me. I like to know the manners of my time—contemporary gossip, not antediluvian. These Dryasdust fellows get a reputation by raking up some small scandal about Semiramis or Nitocris, and then we have a thousand and one poems written upon it by all the warblers big and little. But I don't care a straw about the *faux pas* of the mummies. You do, though. You are one of the historical men—more interested in a lady when she's got a rag face and skeleton toes peeping out. Does that flatter your imagination?"

"Well, if she had any woes in her love, one has the satisfaction of knowing that she's well out of them."

"Ah, you are thinking of the Medea, I see."

Deronda then chose to point to some giant oaks worth looking at in their bareness. He also felt an interest in this piece of contemporary gossip, but he was satisfied that Mr Vandernoodt had no more to tell about it.

Since the early days when he tried to construct the hidden story of his own birth, his mind had perhaps never been so active in weaving probabilities about any private affair as it had now begun to be about Gwendolen's marriage. This unavowed relation of Grandcourt's,—could she have gained some knowledge of it, which caused her to shrink from the match—a shrinking finally overcome by the urgency of poverty? He could recall almost every word she had said to him, and in certain of these words he seemed to discern that she was conscious of having done some wrong—inflicted some injury. His own acute experience made him alive to the form of injury which might affect the unavowed children and their mother. Was Mrs Grandcourt, under all her determined show of satisfaction, gnawed by a double, a treble-headed grief—self-reproach, disappointment, jealousy? He dwelt especially on all the slight signs of self-reproach: he was inclined to judge her tenderly, to excuse, to pity. He thought he had found a key now by which to interpret her more clearly: what magnifying of her misery might not a young creature get into who had wedded her fresh hopes to old secrets! He thought he saw clearly enough now why Sir Hugo had never dropped any hint of this affair

to him ; and immediately the image of this Mrs Glasher became painfully associated with his own hidden birth. Gwendolen knowing of that woman and her children, marrying Grandcourt, and showing herself contented, would have been among the most repulsive of beings to him ; but Gwendolen tasting the bitterness of remorse for having contributed to their injury was brought very near to his fellow-feeling. If it were so, she had got to a common plane of understanding with him on some difficulties of life which a woman is rarely able to judge of with any justice or generosity ; for, according to precedent, Gwendolen's view of her position might easily have been no other than that her husband's marriage with her was his entrance on the path of virtue, while Mrs Glasher represented his forsaken sin. And Deronda had naturally some resentment on behalf of the Hagars and Ishmaels.

Undeniably Deronda's growing solicitude about Gwendolen depended chiefly on her peculiar manner towards him ; and I suppose neither man nor woman would be the better for an utter insensibility to such appeals. One sign that his interest in her had changed its footing was that he dismissed any caution against her being a coquette setting snares to involve him in a vulgar flirtation,

and determined that he would not again evade any opportunity of talking with her. He had shaken off Mr Vandernoodt, and got into a solitary corner in the twilight ; but half an hour was long enough to think of those possibilities in Gwendolen's position and state of mind ; and on forming the determination not to avoid her, he remembered that she was likely to be at tea with the other ladies in the drawing-room. The conjecture was true ; for Gwendolen, after resolving not to go down again for the next four hours, began to feel, at the end of one, that in shutting herself up she missed all chances of seeing and hearing, and that her visit would only last two days more. She adjusted herself, put on her little air of self-possession, and going down, made herself resolutely agreeable. Only ladies were assembled, and Lady Pentreath was amusing them with a description of a drawing-room under the Regency, and the figure that was cut by ladies and gentlemen in 1819, the year she was presented—when Deronda entered.

“Shall I be acceptable ?” he said. “Perhaps I had better go back and look for the others. I suppose they are in the billiard-room.”

“No, no ; stay where you are,” said Lady Pent-

reath. "They were all getting tired of me ; let us hear what *you* have to say."

"That is rather an embarrassing appeal," said Deronda, drawing up a chair near Lady Mallinger's elbow at the tea-table. "I think I had better take the opportunity of mentioning our songstress," he added, looking at Lady Mallinger,—“unless you have done so.”

"Oh, the little Jewess !" said Lady Mallinger. "No, I have not mentioned her. It never entered my head that any one here wanted singing lessons."

"All ladies know some one else who wants singing lessons," said Deronda. "I have happened to find an exquisite singer ;"—here he turned to Lady Pentreath. "She is living with some ladies who are friends of mine—the mother and sisters of a man who was my chum at Cambridge. She was on the stage at Vienna ; but she wants to leave that life, and maintain herself by teaching."

"There are swarms of those people, aren't there ?" said the old lady. "Are her lessons to be very cheap or very expensive ? Those are the two baits I know of."

"There is another bait for those who hear her," said Deronda. "Her singing is something quite

exceptional, I think. She has had such first-rate teaching—or rather first-rate instinct with her teaching—that you might imagine her singing all came by nature.”

“Why did she leave the stage, then?” said Lady Pentreath. “I’m too old to believe in first-rate people giving up first-rate chances.”

“Her voice was too weak. It is a delicious voice for a room. You who put up with my singing of Schubert would be enchanted with hers,” said Deronda, looking at Mrs Raymond. “And I imagine she would not object to sing at private parties or concerts. Her voice is quite equal to that.”

“I am to have her in my drawing-room when we go up to town,” said Lady Mallinger. “You shall hear her then. I have not heard her myself yet; but I trust Daniel’s recommendation. I mean my girls to have lessons of her.”

“Is it a charitable affair?” said Lady Pentreath. “I can’t bear charitable music.”

Lady Mallinger, who was rather helpless in conversation, and felt herself under an engagement not to tell anything of Mirah’s story, had an embarrassed smile on her face, and glanced at Deronda.

“It is a charity to those who want to have a

good model of feminine singing," said Deronda. "I think everybody who has ears would benefit by a little improvement on the ordinary style. If you heard Miss Lapidoth"—here he looked at Gwendolen—"perhaps you would revoke your resolution to give up singing."

"I should rather think my resolution would be confirmed," said Gwendolen. "I don't feel able to follow your advice of enjoying my own middlingness."

"For my part," said Deronda, "people who do anything finely always inspire me to try. I don't mean that they make me believe I can do it as well. But they make the thing, whatever it may be, seem worthy to be done. I can bear to think my own music not good for much, but the world would be more dismal if I thought music itself not good for much. Excellence encourages one about life generally; it shows the spiritual wealth of the world."

"But then if we can't imitate it?—it only makes our own life seem the tamer," said Gwendolen, in a mood to resent encouragement founded on her own insignificance.

"That depends on the point of view, I think," said Deronda. "We should have a poor life of it if we were reduced for all our pleasure to our own

performances. A little private imitation of what is good is a sort of private devotion to it, and most of us ought to practise art only in the light of private study—preparation to understand and enjoy what the few can do for us. I think Miss Lapidoth is one of the few.”

“She must be a very happy person, don’t you think?” said Gwendolen, with a touch of sarcasm, and a turn of her neck towards Mrs Raymond.

“I don’t know,” answered the independent lady; “I must hear more of her before I said that.”

“It may have been a bitter disappointment to her that her voice failed her for the stage,” said Juliet Fenn, sympathetically.

“I suppose she’s past her best, though,” said the deep voice of Lady Pentreath.

“On the contrary, she has not reached it,” said Deronda. “She is barely twenty.”

“And very pretty,” interposed Lady Mallinger, with an amiable wish to help Deronda. “And she has very good manners. I’m sorry she is a bigoted Jewess; I should not like it for anything else, but it doesn’t matter in singing.”

“Well, since her voice is too weak for her to scream much, I’ll tell Lady Clementina to set her on my nine granddaughters,” said Lady Pentreath;

"and I hope she'll convince eight of them that they have not voice enough to sing anywhere but at church. My notion is, that many of our girls nowadays want lessons not to sing."

"I have had my lessons in that," said Gwendolen, looking at Deronda. "You see Lady Pentreath is on my side."

While she was speaking, Sir Hugo entered with some of the other gentlemen, including Grandcourt, and standing against the group at the low tea-table said—

"What imposition is Deronda putting on you ladies—slipping in among you by himself?"

"Wanting to pass off an obscurity on us as better than any celebrity," said Lady Pentreath—"a pretty singing Jewess who is to astonish these young people. You and I, who heard Catalani in her prime, are not so easily astonished."

Sir Hugo listened with his good-humoured smile as he took a cup of tea from his wife, and then said, "Well, you know, a Liberal is bound to think that there have been singers since Catalani's time."

"Ah, you are younger than I am. I daresay you are one of the men who ran after Alcharisi. But she married off and left you all in the lurch."

"Yes, yes; it's rather too bad when these great

singers marry themselves into silence before they have a crack in their voices. And the husband is a public robber. I remember Leroux saying, ‘A man might as well take down a fine peal of church bells and carry them off to the steppes,’” said Sir Hugo, setting down his cup and turning away, while Deronda, who had moved from his place to make room for others, and felt that he was not in request, sat down a little apart. Presently he became aware that, in the general dispersion of the group, Gwendolen had extricated herself from the attentions of Mr Vandernoodt and had walked to the piano, where she stood apparently examining the music which lay on the desk. Will any one be surprised at Deronda’s concluding that she wished him to join her? Perhaps she wanted to make amends for the unpleasant tone of resistance with which she had met his recommendation of Mirah, for he had noticed that her first impulse often was to say what she afterwards wished to retract. He went to her side and said—

“Are you relenting about the music and looking for something to play or sing?”

“I am not looking for anything, but I *am* relenting,” said Gwendolen, speaking in a submissive tone.

“May I know the reason?”

"I should like to hear Miss Lapidoth and have lessons from her, since you admire her so much—that is, of course, when we go to town. I mean lessons in rejoicing at her excellence and my own deficiency," said Gwendolen, turning on him a sweet open smile.

"I shall be really glad for you to see and hear her," said Deronda, returning the smile in kind.

"Is she as perfect in everything else as in her music?"

"I can't vouch for that exactly. I have not seen enough of her. But I have seen nothing in her that I could wish to be different. She has had an unhappy life. Her troubles began in early childhood, and she has grown up among very painful surroundings. But I think you will say that no advantages could have given her more grace and truer refinement."

"I wonder what sort of troubles hers were?"

"I have not any very precise knowledge. But I know that she was on the brink of drowning herself in despair."

"And what hindered her?" said Gwendolen, quickly, looking at Deronda.

"Some ray or other came—which made her feel that she ought to live—that it was good to live," he answered, quietly. "She is full of piety

and seems capable of submitting to anything when it takes the form of duty."

"Those people are not to be pitied," said Gwendolen, impatiently. "I have no sympathy with women who are always doing right. I don't believe in their great sufferings." Her fingers moved quickly among the edges of the music.

"It is true," said Deronda, "that the consciousness of having done wrong is something deeper, more bitter. I suppose we faulty creatures can never feel so much for the irreproachable as for those who are bruised in the struggle with their own faults. It is a very ancient story, that of the lost sheep—but it comes up afresh every day."

"That is a way of speaking—it is not acted on, it is not real," said Gwendolen, bitterly. "You admire Miss Lapidoth because you think her blameless, perfect. And you know you would despise a woman who had done something you thought very wrong."

"That would depend entirely on her own view of what she had done," said Deronda.

"You would be satisfied if she were very wretched, I suppose?" said Gwendolen, impetuously.

"No, not satisfied—full of sorrow for her. It was not a mere way of speaking. I did not mean

to say that the finer nature is not more adorable ; I meant that those who would be comparatively uninteresting beforehand may become worthier of sympathy when they do something that awakens in them a keen remorse. Lives are enlarged in different ways. I daresay some would never get their eyes opened if it were not for a violent shock from the consequences of their own actions. And when they are suffering in that way one must care for them more than for the comfortably self-satisfied." Deronda forgot everything but his vision of what Gwendolen's experience had probably been, and urged by compassion let his eyes and voice express as much interest as they would.

Gwendolen had slipped on to the music-stool, and looked up at him with pain in her long eyes, like a wounded animal asking help.

"Are you persuading Mrs Grandcourt to play to us, Dan?" said Sir Hugo, coming up and putting his hand on Deronda's shoulder with a gentle admonitory pinch.

"I cannot persuade myself," said Gwendolen, rising.

Others had followed Sir Hugo's lead, and there was an end of any liability to confidences for that day. But the next was New Year's Eve ; and a

grand dance, to which the chief tenants were invited, was to be held in the picture-gallery above the cloister—the sort of entertainment in which numbers and general movement may create privacy. When Gwendolen was dressing, she longed, in remembrance of Leubronn, to put on the old turquoise necklace for her sole ornament; but she dared not offend her husband by appearing in that shabby way on an occasion when he would demand her utmost splendour. Determined to wear the memorial necklace somehow, she wound it thrice round her wrist and made a bracelet of it—having gone to her room to put it on just before the time of entering the ball-room.

It was always a beautiful scene, this dance on New Year's Eve, which had been kept up by family tradition as nearly in the old fashion as inexorable change would allow. Red carpet was laid down for the occasion; hothouse plants and evergreens were arranged in bowers at the extremities and in every recess of the gallery; and the old portraits stretching back through generations even to the pre-portraying period, made a piquant line of spectators. Some neighbouring gentry, major and minor, were invited; and it was certainly an occasion when a prospective master and mistress of Abbot's and King's Top-

ping might see their future glory in an agreeable light, as a picturesque provincial supremacy with a rent-roll personified by the most prosperous-looking tenants. Sir Hugo expected Grandcourt to feel flattered by being asked to the Abbey at a time which included this festival in honour of the family estate; but he also hoped that his own hale appearance might impress his successor with the probable length of time that would elapse before the succession came, and with the wisdom of preferring a good actual sum to a minor property that must be waited for. All present, down to the least important farmer's daughter, knew that they were to see "young Grandcourt," Sir Hugo's nephew, the presumptive heir and future baronet, now visiting the Abbey with his bride after an absence of many years; any coolness between uncle and nephew having, it was understood, given way to a friendly warmth. The bride opening the ball with Sir Hugo was necessarily the cynosure of all eyes; and less than a year before, if some magic mirror could have shown Gwendolen her actual position, she would have imagined herself moving in it with a glow of triumphant pleasure, conscious that she held in her hands a life full of favourable chances which her cleverness and spirit would enable her

to make the best of. And now she was wondering that she could get so little joy out of the exaltation to which she had been suddenly lifted, away from the distasteful petty empire of her girlhood with its irksome lack of distinction and superfluity of sisters. She would have been glad to be even unreasonably elated, and to forget everything but the flattery of the moment ; but she was like one courting sleep, in whom thoughts insist like wilful tormentors.

Wondering in this way at her own dulness, and all the while longing for an excitement that would deaden importunate aches, she was passing through files of admiring beholders in the country-dance with which it was traditional to open the ball, and was being generally regarded by her own sex as an enviable woman. It was remarked that she carried herself with a wonderful air, considering that she had been nobody in particular, and without a farthing to her fortune : if she had been a duke's daughter, or one of the royal princesses, she could not have taken the honours of the evening more as a matter of course. Poor Gwendolen ! It would by-and-by become a sort of skill in which she was automatically practised, to bear this last great gambling loss with an air of perfect self-possession.

The next couple that passed were also worth looking at. Lady Pentreath had said, "I shall stand up for one dance, but I shall choose my partner. Mr Deronda, you are the youngest man; I mean to dance with you. Nobody is old enough to make a good pair with me. I must have a contrast." And the contrast certainly set off the old lady to the utmost. She was one of those women who are never handsome till they are old, and she had had the wisdom to embrace the beauty of age as early as possible. What might have seemed harshness in her features when she was young, had turned now into a satisfactory strength of form and expression which defied wrinkles, and was set off by a crown of white hair; her well-built figure was well covered with black drapery, her ears and neck comfortably caressed with lace, showing none of those withered spaces which one would think it a pitiable condition of poverty to expose. She glided along gracefully enough, her dark eyes still with a mischievous smile in them as she observed the company. Her partner's young richness of tint against the flattened hues and rougher forms of her aged head had an effect something like that of a fine flower against a lichenous branch. Perhaps the tenants hardly appreciated this pair. Lady Pentreath was

nothing more than a straight, active old lady : Mr Deronda was a familiar figure regarded with friendliness ; but if he had been the heir, it would have been regretted that his face was not as unmistakably English as Sir Hugo's.

Grandcourt's appearance when he came up with Lady Mallinger was not impeached with foreignness : still the satisfaction in it was not complete. It would have been matter of congratulation if one who had the luck to inherit two old family estates had had more hair, a fresher colour, and a look of greater animation ; but that fine families dwindled off into females, and estates ran together into the single heirship of a mealy-complexioned male, was a tendency in things which seemed to be accounted for by a citation of other instances. It was agreed that Mr Grandcourt could never be taken for anything but what he was—a born gentleman ; and that, in fact, he looked like an heir. Perhaps the person least complacently disposed towards him at that moment was Lady Mallinger, to whom going in procession up this country-dance with Grandcourt was a blazonment of herself as the infelicitous wife who had produced nothing but daughters, little better than no children, poor dear things, except for her own fondness and for Sir Hugo's wonderful goodness to them. But such

inward discomfort could not prevent the gentle lady from looking fair and stout to admiration, or her full blue eyes from glancing mildly at her neighbours. All the mothers and fathers held it a thousand pities that she had not had a fine boy, or even several—which might have been expected, to look at her when she was first married.

The gallery included only three sides of the quadrangle, the fourth being shut off as a lobby or corridor: one side was used for dancing, and the opposite side for the supper-table, while the intermediate part was less brilliantly lit, and fitted with comfortable seats. Later in the evening Gwendolen was in one of these seats, and Grandcourt was standing near her. They were not talking to each other: she was leaning backward in her chair, and he against the wall; and Deronda, happening to observe this, went up to ask her if she had resolved not to dance any more. Having himself been doing hard duty in this way among the guests, he thought he had earned the right to sink for a little while into the background, and he had spoken little to Gwendolen since their conversation at the piano the day before. Grandcourt's presence would only make it the easier to show that pleasure in talking to her even about trivialities which would be a sign of friendliness; and

he fancied that her face looked blank. A smile beamed over it as she saw him coming, and she raised herself from her leaning posture. Grandcourt had been grumbling at the *ennui* of staying so long in this stupid dance, and proposing that they should vanish: she had resisted on the ground of politeness—not without being a little frightened at the probability that he was silently angry with her. She had her reason for staying, though she had begun to despair of the opportunity for the sake of which she had put the old necklace on her wrist. But now at last Deronda had come.

“Yes; I shall not dance any more. Are you not glad?” she said, with some gaiety. “You might have felt obliged humbly to offer yourself as a partner, and I feel sure you have danced more than you like already.”

“I will not deny that,” said Deronda, “since you have danced as much as you like.”

“But will you take trouble for me in another way, and fetch me a glass of that fresh water?”

It was but a few steps that Deronda had to go for the water. Gwendolen was wrapped in the lightest, softest of white woollen burnouses, under which her hands were hidden. While he was gone she had drawn off her glove, which was fin-

ished with a lace ruffle, and when she put up her hand to take the glass and lifted it to her mouth, the necklace-bracelet, which in its triple winding adapted itself clumsily to her wrist, was necessarily conspicuous. Grandcourt saw it, and saw that it was attracting Deronda's notice.

"What is that hideous thing you have got on your wrist?" said the husband.

"That?" said Gwendolen, composedly, pointing to the turquoises, while she still held the glass; "it is an old necklace that I like to wear. I lost it once, and some one found it for me."

With that she gave the glass again to Deronda, who immediately carried it away, and on returning said, in order to banish any consciousness about the necklace—

"It is worth while for you to go and look out at one of the windows on that side. You can see the finest possible moonlight on the stone pillars and carving, and shadows waving across it in the wind."

"I should like to see it. Will you go?" said Gwendolen, looking up at her husband.

He cast his eyes down at her, and saying, "No, Deronda will take you," slowly moved from his leaning attitude, and slowly walked away.

Gwendolen's face for a moment showed a fleeting

vexation: she resented this show of indifference towards her. Deronda felt annoyed, chiefly for her sake; and with a quick sense that it would relieve her most to behave as if nothing peculiar had occurred, he said, "Will you take my arm and go, while only servants are there?" He thought that he understood well her action in drawing his attention to the necklace: she wished him to infer that she had submitted her mind to rebuke—her speech and manner had from the first fluctuated towards that submission—and that she felt no lingering resentment. Her evident confidence in his interpretation of her appealed to him as a peculiar claim.

When they were walking together, Gwendolen felt as if the annoyance which had just happened had removed another film of reserve from between them, and she had more right than before to be as open as she wished. She did not speak, being filled with the sense of silent confidence, until they were in front of the window looking out on the moonlit court. A sort of bower had been made round the window, turning it into a recess. Quitting his arm, she folded her hands in her burnous, and pressed her brow against the glass. He moved slightly away, and held the lapels of his coat with his thumbs under the

collar as his manner was: he had a wonderful power of standing perfectly still, and in that position reminded one sometimes of Dante's *spiriti magni con occhi tardi e gravi*. (Doubtless some of these danced in their youth, doubted of their own vocation, and found their own times too modern.) He abstained from remarking on the scene before them, fearing that any indifferent words might jar on her: already the calm light and shadow, the ancient steadfast forms, had aloofness enough from those inward troubles which he felt sure were agitating her. And he judged aright: she would have been impatient of polite conversation. The incidents of the last minute or two had receded behind former thoughts which she had imagined herself uttering to Deronda, and which now urged themselves to her lips. In a subdued voice, she said—

“Suppose I had gambled again, and lost the necklace again, what should you have thought of me?”

“Worse than I do now.”

“Then you are mistaken about me. You wanted me not to do that—not to make my gain out of another's loss in that way—and I have done a great deal worse.”

“I can imagine temptations,” said Deronda.

“Perhaps I am able to understand what you mean. At least I understand self-reproach.” In spite of preparation he was almost alarmed at Gwendolen’s precipitancy of confidence towards him, in contrast with her habitual resolute concealment.

“What should you do if you were like me—feeling that you were wrong and miserable, and dreading everything to come?” It seemed that she was hurrying to make the utmost use of this opportunity to speak as she would.

“That is not to be amended by doing one thing only—but many,” said Deronda, decisively.

“What?” said Gwendolen, hastily, moving her brow from the glass and looking at him.

He looked full at her in return, with what she thought was severity. He felt that it was not a moment in which he must let himself be tender, and flinch from implying a hard opinion.

“I mean there are many thoughts and habits that may help us to bear inevitable sorrow. Multitudes have to bear it.”

She turned her brow to the window again, and said impatiently, “You must tell me then what to think and what to do; else why did you not let me go on doing as I liked, and not minding? If I had gone on gambling I might have won again, and I might have got not to care for any-

thing else. You would not let me do that. Why shouldn't I do as I like, and not mind? Other people do." Poor Gwendolen's speech expressed nothing very clearly except her irritation.

"I don't believe you would ever get not to mind," said Deronda, with deep-toned decision. "If it were true that baseness and cruelty made an escape from pain, what difference would that make to people who can't be quite base or cruel? Idiots escape some pain; but you can't be an idiot. Some may do wrong to another without remorse; but suppose one does feel remorse? I believe you could never lead an injurious life—all reckless lives are injurious, pestilential—without feeling remorse." Deronda's unconscious fervour had gathered as he went on: he was uttering thoughts which he had used for himself in moments of painful meditation.

"Then tell me what better I can do," said Gwendolen, insistently.

"Many things. Look on other lives besides your own. See what their troubles are, and how they are borne. Try to care about something in this vast world besides the gratification of small selfish desires. Try to care for what is best in thought and action—something that is good apart from the accidents of your own lot."

For an instant or two Gwendolen was mute. Then, again moving her brow from the glass, she said—

“You mean that I am selfish and ignorant.”

He met her fixed look in silence before he answered firmly—

“You will not go on being selfish and ignorant.”

She did not turn away her glance or let her eyelids fall, but a change came over her face—that subtle change in nerve and muscle which will sometimes give a childlike expression even to the elderly : it is the subsidence of self-assertion.

“Shall I lead you back?” said Deronda, gently, turning and offering her his arm again. She took it silently, and in that way they came in sight of Grandcourt, who was walking slowly near their former place. Gwendolen went up to him and said, “I am ready to go now. Mr Deronda will excuse us to Lady Mallinger.”

“Certainly,” said Deronda. “Lord and Lady Pentreath disappeared some time ago.”

Grandcourt gave his arm in silent compliance, nodding over his shoulder to Deronda, and Gwendolen too only half turned to bow and say, “Thanks.” The husband and wife left the gallery and paced the corridors in silence. When the door had closed on them in the boudoir, Grand-

court threw himself into a chair and said, with undertoned peremptoriness, "Sit down." She, already in the expectation of something unpleasant, had thrown off her burnous with nervous unconsciousness, and immediately obeyed. Turning his eyes towards her, he began:

"Oblige me in future by not showing whims like a mad woman in a play."

"What do you mean?" said Gwendolen.

"I suppose there is some understanding between you and Deronda about that thing you have on your wrist. If you have anything to say to him, say it. But don't carry on a telegraphing which other people are supposed not to see. It's damnable vulgar."

"You can know all about the necklace," said Gwendolen, her angry pride resisting the nightmare of fear.

"I don't want to know. Keep to yourself whatever you like." Grandcourt paused between each sentence, and in each his speech seemed to become more preternaturally distinct in its inward tones. "What I care to know, I shall know without your telling me. Only you will please to behave as becomes my wife. And not make a spectacle of yourself."

"Do you object to my talking to Mr Deronda?"

“I don’t care two straws about Deronda, or any other conceited hanger-on. You may talk to him as much as you like. He is not going to take my place. You are my wife. And you will either fill your place properly—to the world and to me—or you will go to the devil.”

“I never intended anything but to fill my place properly,” said Gwendolen, with bitterest mortification in her soul.

“You put that thing on your wrist, and hid it from me till you wanted him to see it. Only fools go into that deaf and dumb talk, and think they’re secret. You will understand that you are not to compromise yourself. Behave with dignity. That’s all I have to say.”

With that last word Grandcourt rose, turned his back to the fire and looked down on her. She was mute. There was no reproach that she dared to fling at him in return for these insulting admonitions, and the very reason she felt them to be insulting was that their purport went with the most absolute dictate of her pride. What she would least like to incur was the making a fool of herself and being compromised. It was futile and irrelevant to try and explain that Deronda too had only been a monitor—the strongest of all monitors. Grandcourt was contemptuous, not jealous; con-

temptuously certain of all the subjection he cared for. Why could she not rebel, and defy him? She longed to do it. But she might as well have tried to defy the texture of her nerves and the palpitation of her heart. Her husband had a ghostly army at his back, that could close round her wherever she might turn. She sat in her splendid attire, like a white image of helplessness, and he seemed to gratify himself with looking at her. She could not even make a passionate exclamation, or throw up her arms, as she would have done in her maiden days. The sense of his scorn kept her still.

"Shall I ring?" he said, after what seemed to her a long while. She moved her head in assent, and after ringing he went to his dressing-room.

Certain words were gnawing within her. "The wrong you have done me will be your own curse." As he closed the door, the bitter tears rose, and the gnawing words provoked an answer: "Why did you put your fangs into me and not into him?" It was uttered in a whisper, as the tears came up silently. But immediately she pressed her handkerchief against her eyes, and checked her tendency to sob.

The next day, recovered from the shuddering fit of this evening scene, she determined to use the

charter which Grandcourt had scornfully given her, and to talk as much as she liked with Deronda ; but no opportunities occurred, and any little devices she could imagine for creating them were rejected by her pride, which was now doubly active. Not towards Deronda himself—she was curiously free from alarm lest he should think her openness wanting in dignity : it was part of his power over her that she believed him free from all misunderstanding as to the way in which she appealed to him : or rather, that he should misunderstand her had never entered into her mind. But the last morning came, and still she had never been able to take up the dropped thread of their talk, and she was without devices. She and Grandcourt were to leave at three o'clock. It was too irritating that after a walk in the grounds had been planned in Deronda's hearing, he did not present himself to join in it. Grandcourt was gone with Sir Hugo to King's Topping, to see the old manor-house ; others of the gentlemen were shooting ; she was condemned to go and see the decoy and the water-fowl, and everything else that she least wanted to see, with the ladies, with old Lord Pentreath and his anecdotes, with Mr Vandernoodt and his admiring manners. The irritation became too strong for her : without premedi-

tation, she took advantage of the winding road to linger a little out of sight, and then set off back to the house, almost running when she was safe from observation. She entered by a side door, and the library was on her left hand; Deronda, she knew, was often there; why might she not turn in there as well as into any other room in the house? She had been taken there expressly to see the illuminated family tree, and other remarkable things—what more natural than that she should like to look in again? The thing most to be feared was that the room would be empty of Deronda, for the door was ajar. She pushed it gently, and looked round it. He was there, writing busily at a distant table, with his back towards the door (in fact, Sir Hugo had asked him to answer some constituents' letters which had become pressing). An enormous log-fire, with the scent of russia from the books, made the great room as warmly odorous as a private chapel in which the censers have been swinging. It seemed too daring to go in—too rude to speak and interrupt him; yet she went in on the noiseless carpet, and stood still for two or three minutes, till Deronda, having finished a letter, pushed it aside for signature, and threw himself back to consider whether there were anything else for him to do, or whether he could

walk out for the chance of meeting the party which included Gwendolen, when he heard her voice saying, "Mr Deronda."

It was certainly startling. He rose hastily, turned round, and pushed away his chair with a strong expression of surprise.

"Am I wrong to come in?" said Gwendolen.

"I thought you were far on your walk," said Deronda.

"I turned back," said Gwendolen.

"Do you not intend to go out again? I could join you now, if you would allow me."

"No; I want to say something, and I can't stay long," said Gwendolen, speaking quickly in a subdued tone, while she walked forward and rested her arms and muff on the back of the chair he had pushed away from him. "I want to tell you that it is really so—I can't help feeling remorse for having injured others. That was what I meant when I said that I had done worse than gamble again and pawn the necklace again—something more injurious, as you called it. And I can't alter it. I am punished, but I can't alter it. You said I could do many things. Tell me again. What should you do—what should you feel, if you were in my place?"

The hurried directness with which she spoke—

the absence of all her little airs, as if she were only concerned to use the time in getting an answer that would guide her, made her appeal unspeakably touching.

Deronda said,—“I should feel something of what you feel—deep sorrow.”

“But what would you try to do?” said Gwendolen, with urgent quickness.

“Order my life so as to make any possible amends, and keep away from doing any sort of injury again,” said Deronda, catching her sense that the time for speech was brief.

“But I can’t—I can’t; I must go on,” said Gwendolen, in a passionate loud whisper. “I have thrust out others—I have made my gain out of their loss—tried to make it—tried. And I must go on. I can’t alter it.”

It was impossible to answer this instantaneously. Her words had confirmed his conjecture, and the situation of all concerned rose in swift images before him. His feeling for those who had been “thrust out” sanctioned her remorse; he could not try to nullify it, yet his heart was full of pity for her. But as soon as he could he answered—taking up her last words—

“That is the bitterest of all—to wear the yoke of our own wrong-doing. But if you submitted

to that, as men submit to maiming or a lifelong incurable disease?—and made the unalterable wrong a reason for more effort towards a good that may do something to counterbalance the evil? One who has committed irremediable errors may be scourged by that consciousness into a higher course than is common. There are many examples. Feeling what it is to have spoiled one life may well make us long to save other lives from being spoiled.”

“But you have not wronged any one, or spoiled their lives,” said Gwendolen, hastily. “It is only others who have wronged *you*.”

Deronda coloured slightly, but said immediately—“I suppose our keen feeling for ourselves might end in giving us a keen feeling for others, if, when we are suffering acutely, we were to consider that others go through the same sharp experience. That is a sort of remorse before commission. Can’t you understand that?”

“I think I do—now,” said Gwendolen. “But you were right—I *am* selfish. I have never thought much of any one’s feelings, except my mother’s. I have not been fond of people.—But what can I do?” she went on, more quickly. “I must get up in the morning and do what every one else does. It is all like a dance set beforehand.

I seem to see all that can be—and I am tired and sick of it. And the world is all confusion to me” —she made a gesture of disgust. “You say I am ignorant. But what is the good of trying to know more, unless life were worth more?”

“This good,” said Deronda promptly, with a touch of indignant severity, which he was inclined to encourage as his own safeguard; “life *would* be worth more to you: some real knowledge would give you an interest in the world beyond the small drama of personal desires. It is the curse of your life—forgive me—of so many lives, that all passion is spent in that narrow round, for want of ideas and sympathies to make a larger home for it. Is there any single occupation of mind that you care about with passionate delight or even independent interest?”

Deronda paused, but Gwendolen, looking startled and thrilled as by an electric shock, said nothing, and he went on more insistently—

“I take what you said of music for a small example—it answers for all larger things—you will not cultivate it for the sake of a private joy in it. What sort of earth or heaven would hold any spiritual wealth in it for souls pauperised by inaction? If one firmament has no stimulus for our attention and awe, I don’t see how four would

have it. We should stamp every possible world with the flatness of our own inanity—which is necessarily impious, without faith or fellowship. The refuge you are needing from personal trouble is the higher, the religious life, which holds an enthusiasm for something more than our own appetites and vanities. The few may find themselves in it simply by an elevation of feeling; but for us who have to struggle for our wisdom, the higher life must be a region in which the affections are clad with knowledge.”

The half-indignant remonstrance that vibrated in Deronda's voice came, as often happens, from the habit of inward argument with himself rather than from severity towards Gwendolen; but it had a more beneficent effect on her than any soothings. Nothing is feebler than the indolent rebellion of complaint; and to be roused into self-judgment is comparative activity. For the moment she felt like a shaken child—shaken out of its wailings into awe, and she said humbly—

“I will try. I will think.”

They both stood silent for a minute, as if some third presence had arrested them,—for Deronda, too, was under that sense of pressure which is apt to come when our own winged words seem to

be hovering around us,—till Gwendolen began again—

“You said affection was the best thing, and I have hardly any—none about me. If I could, I would have mamma; but that is impossible. Things have changed to me so—in such a short time. What I used not to like, I long for now. I think I am almost getting fond of the old things now they are gone.” Her lip trembled.

“Take the present suffering as a painful letting in of light,” said Deronda, more gently. “You are conscious of more beyond the round of your own inclinations—you know more of the way in which your life presses on others, and their life on yours. I don’t think you could have escaped the painful process in some form or other.”

“But it is a very cruel form,” said Gwendolen, beating her foot on the ground with returning agitation. “I am frightened at everything. I am frightened at myself. When my blood is fired I can do daring things—take any leap; but that makes me frightened at myself.” She was looking at nothing outside her; but her eyes were directed toward the window, away from Deronda, who, with quick comprehension, said—

“Turn your fear into a safeguard. Keep your dread fixed on the idea of increasing that remorse

which is so bitter to you. Fixed meditation may do a great deal towards defining our longing or dread. We are not always in a state of strong emotion, and when we are calm we can use our memories and gradually change the bias of our fear, as we do our tastes. Take your fear as a safeguard. It is like quickness of hearing. It may make consequences passionately present to you. Try to take hold of your sensibility, and use it as if it were a faculty, like vision." Deronda uttered each sentence more urgently; he felt as if he were seizing a faint chance of rescuing her from some indefinite danger.

"Yes, I know; I understand what you mean," said Gwendolen, in her loud whisper, not turning her eyes, but lifting up her small gloved hand and waving it in deprecation of the notion that it was easy to obey that advice. "But if feelings rose—there are some feelings—hatred and anger—how can I be good when they keep rising? And if there came a moment when I felt stifled and could bear it no longer——" She broke off, and with agitated lips looked at Deronda, but the expression on his face pierced her with an entirely new feeling. He was under the baffling difficulty of discerning, that what he had been urging on her was thrown into the pallid distance of mere

thought before the outburst of her habitual emotion. It was as if he saw her drowning while his limbs were bound. The pained compassion which was spread over his features as he watched her, affected her with a compunction unlike any she had felt before, and in a changed imploring tone she said—

“I am grieving you. I am ungrateful. You *can* help me. I will think of everything. I will try. Tell me—it will not be a pain to you that I have dared to speak of my trouble to you? You began it, you know, when you rebuked me.” There was a melancholy smile on her lips as she said that, but she added more entreatingly, “It will not be a pain to you?”

“Not if it does anything to save you from an evil to come,” said Deronda, with strong emphasis; “otherwise, it will be a lasting pain.”

“No—no—it shall not be. It may be—it shall be better with me because I have known you.” She turned immediately, and quitted the room.

When she was on the first landing of the staircase, Sir Hugo passed across the hall on his way to the library, and saw her. Grandcourt was not with him.

Deronda, when the baronet entered, was standing in his ordinary attitude, grasping his coat

collar, with his back to the table, and with that indefinable expression by which we judge that a man is still in the shadow of a scene which he has just gone through. He moved, however, and began to arrange the letters.

“Has Mrs Grandcourt been in here?” said Sir Hugo.

“Yes, she has.”

“Where are the others?”

“I believe she left them somewhere in the grounds.”

After a moment's silence, in which Sir Hugo looked at a letter without reading it, he said, “I hope you are not playing with fire, Dan—you understand me.”

“I believe I do, sir,” said Deronda, after a slight hesitation, which had some repressed anger in it. “But there is nothing answering to your metaphor—no fire, and therefore no chance of scorching.”

Sir Hugo looked searchingly at him, and then said, “So much the better. For between ourselves, I fancy there may be some hidden gun-powder in that establishment.”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

- Aspern.* Pardon, my lord—I speak for Sigismund.
Fronsberg. For him? Oh, ay—for him I always hold
 A pardon safe in bank, sure he will draw
 Sooner or later on me. What his need?
 Mad project broken? fine mechanic wings
 That would not fly? durance, assault on watch,
 Bill for Epernay, not a crust to eat?
Aspern. Oh, none of these, my lord; he has escaped
 From Circe's herd, and seeks to win the love
 Of your fair ward Cecilia; but would win
 First your consent. You frown.
Fronsberg. Distinguish words.
 I said I held a pardon, not consent.

IN spite of Deronda's reasons for wishing to be in town again—reasons in which his anxiety for Mirah was blent with curiosity to know more of the enigmatic Mordecai—he did not manage to go up before Sir Hugo, who preceded his family that he might be ready for the opening of Parliament on the 6th of February. Deronda took up his quarters in Park Lane, aware that his chambers were sufficiently tenanted by Hans Meyrick. This was what he expected; but he found other things not altogether according to his expectations.

Most of us remember Retzsch's drawing of destiny in the shape of Mephistopheles playing at chess with man for his soul, a game in which we may imagine the clever adversary making a feint of unintended moves so as to set the beguiled mortal on carrying his defensive pieces away from the true point of attack. The fiend makes preparation his favourite object of mockery, that he may fatally persuade us against our best safeguard: he even meddles so far as to suggest our taking out waterproofs when he is well aware the sky is going to clear, foreseeing that the imbecile will turn this delusion into a prejudice against waterproofs instead of giving a closer study to the weather-signs. It is a peculiar test of a man's metal when, after he has painfully adjusted himself to what seems a wise provision, he finds all his mental precaution a little beside the mark, and his excellent intentions no better than miscalculated dovetails, accurately cut from a wrong starting-point. His magnanimity has got itself ready to meet misbehaviour, and finds quite a different call upon it. Something of this kind happened to Deronda.

His first impression was one of pure pleasure and amusement at finding his sitting-room transformed into an *atelier* strewn with miscellaneous

drawings and with the contents of two chests from Rome, the lower half of the windows darkened with baize, and the blond Hans in his weird youth as the presiding genius of the littered place—his hair longer than of old, his face more whimsically creased, and his high voice as usual getting higher under the excitement of rapid talk. The friendship of the two had been kept up warmly since the memorable Cambridge time, not only by correspondence but by little episodes of companionship abroad and in England, and the original relation of confidence on one side and indulgence on the other had been developed in practice, as is wont to be the case where such spiritual borrowing and lending has been well begun.

“I knew you would like to see my casts and antiquities,” said Hans, after the first hearty greetings and inquiries, “so I didn’t scruple to unlade my chests here. But I’ve found two rooms at Chelsea not many hundred yards from my mother and sisters, and I shall soon be ready to hang out there—when they’ve scraped the walls and put in some new lights. That’s all I’m waiting for. But you see I don’t wait to begin work: you can’t conceive what a great fellow I’m going to be. The seed of immortality has sprouted within me.”

"Only a fungoid growth, I daresay—a crowing disease in the lungs," said Deronda, accustomed to treat Hans in brotherly fashion. He was walking towards some drawings propped on the ledge of his bookcases; five rapidly-sketched heads—different aspects of the same face. He stood at a convenient distance from them, without making any remark. Hans, too, was silent for a minute, took up his palette and began touching the picture on his easel.

"What do you think of them?" he said at last.

"The full face looks too massive; otherwise the likenesses are good," said Deronda, more coldly than was usual with him.

"No, it is not too massive," said Hans, decisively. "I have noted that. There is always a little surprise when one passes from the profile to the full face. But I shall enlarge her scale for Berenice. I am making a Berenice series—look at the sketches along there—and now I think of it, you are just the model I want for the Agrippa." Hans, still with pencil and palette in hand, had moved to Deronda's side while he said this, but he added hastily, as if conscious of a mistake, "No, no, I forgot; you don't like sitting for your portrait, confound you! However, I've picked up a capital Titus. There are to be five

in the series. The first is Berenice clasping the knees of Gessius Florus and beseeching him to spare her people; I've got that on the easel. Then this, where she is standing on the Xystus with Agrippa, entreating the people not to injure themselves by resistance."

"Agrippa's legs will never do," said Deronda.

"The legs are good realistically," said Hans, his face creasing drolly; "public men are often shaky about the legs—'Their legs, the emblem of their various thought,' as somebody says in the *Rehearsal*."

"But these are as impossible as the legs of Raphael's Alcibiades," said Deronda.

"Then they are good ideally," said Hans. "Agrippa's legs were possibly bad; I idealise that and make them impossibly bad. Art, my Eugenius, must intensify. But never mind the legs now: the third sketch in the series is Berenice exulting in the prospect of being Empress of Rome, when the news has come that Vespasian is declared Emperor and her lover Titus his successor."

"You must put a scroll in her mouth, else people will not understand that. You can't tell that in a picture."

"It will make them feel their ignorance then—an excellent æsthetic effect. The fourth

is, Titus sending Berenice away from Rome after she has shared his palace for ten years—both reluctant, both sad—*invitus invitam*, as Suetonius hath it. I've found a model for the Roman brute."

"Shall you make Berenice look fifty? She must have been that."

"No, no; a few mature touches to show the lapse of time. Dark-eyed beauty wears well, hers particularly. But now, here is the fifth: Berenice seated lonely on the ruins of Jerusalem. That is pure imagination. That is what ought to have been—perhaps was. Now, see how I tell a pathetic negative. Nobody knows what became of her:—that is finely indicated by the series coming to a close. There is no sixth picture." Here Hans pretended to speak with a gasping sense of sublimity, and drew back his head with a frown, as if looking for a like impression on Deronda. "I break off in the Homeric style. The story is chipped off, so to speak, and passes with a ragged edge into nothing—*le néant*; can anything be more sublime, especially in French? The vulgar would desire to see her corpse and burial—perhaps her will read and her linen distributed. But now come and look at this on the easel. I have made some way there."

"That beseeching attitude is really good," said Deronda, after a moment's contemplation. "You have been very industrious in the Christmas holidays; for I suppose you have taken up the subject since you came to London." Neither of them had yet mentioned Mirah.

"No," said Hans, putting touches to his picture, "I made up my mind to the subject before. I take that lucky chance for an augury that I am going to burst on the world as a great painter. I saw a splendid woman in the Trastevere—the grandest women there are half Jewesses—and she set me hunting for a fine situation of a Jewess at Rome. Like other men of vast learning, I ended by taking what lay on the surface. I'll show you a sketch of the Trasteverina's head when I can lay my hands on it."

"I should think she would be a more suitable model for Berenice," said Deronda, not knowing exactly how to express his discontent.

"Not a bit of it. The model ought to be the most beautiful Jewess in the world, and I have found her."

"Have you made yourself sure that she would like to figure in that character? I should think no woman would be more abhorrent to her. Does she quite know what you are doing?"

“Certainly. I got her to throw herself precisely into this attitude. Little mother sat for Gessius Florus, and Mirah clasped her knees.”—Here Hans went a little way off and looked at the effect of his touches.

“I daresay she knows nothing about Berenice’s history,” said Deronda, feeling more indignation than he would have been able to justify.

“Oh yes, she does—ladies’ edition. Berenice was a fervid patriot, but was beguiled by love and ambition into attaching herself to the arch enemy of her people. Whence the Nemesis. Mirah takes it as a tragic parable, and cries to think what the penitent Berenice suffered as she wandered back to Jerusalem and sat desolate amidst desolation. That was her own phrase. I couldn’t find in my heart to tell her I invented that part of the story.”

“Show me your Trasteverina,” said Deronda, chiefly in order to hinder himself from saying something else.

“Shall you mind turning over that folio?” said Hans. “My studies of heads are all there. But they are in confusion. You will perhaps find her next to a crop-eared undergraduate.”

After Deronda had been turning over the drawings a minute or two, he said—

"These seem to be all Cambridge heads and bits of country. Perhaps I had better begin at the other end."

"No; you'll find her about the middle. I emptied one folio into another."

"Is this one of your undergraduates?" said Deronda, holding up a drawing. "It's an unusually agreeable face."

"That? Oh, that's a man named Gascoigne—Rex Gascoigne. An uncommonly good fellow; his upper lip, too, is good. I coached him before he got his scholarship. He ought to have taken honours last Easter. But he was ill, and has had to stay up another year. I must look him up. I want to know how he's going on."

"Here she is, I suppose," said Deronda, holding up the sketch of the Trasteverina.

"Ah," said Hans, looking at it rather contemptuously, "too coarse. I was unregenerate then."

Deronda was silent while he closed the folio, leaving the Trasteverina outside. Then grasping his coat collar, and turning towards Hans, he said, "I daresay my scruples are excessive, Meyrick, but I must ask you to oblige me by giving up this notion."

Hans threw himself into a tragic attitude, and screamed, "What! my series—my immortal Bere-

nice series? Think of what you are saying, man—destroying, as Milton says, not a life but an immortality. Wait before you answer, that I may deposit the implements of my art and be ready to uproot my hair.”

Here Hans laid down his pencil and palette, threw himself backward into a great chair, and hanging limply over the side, shook his long hair half over his face, lifted his hooked fingers on each side his head, and looked up with comic terror at Deronda, who was obliged to smile as he said—

“Paint as many Berenices as you like, but I wish you could feel with me—perhaps you will, on reflection—that you should choose another model.”

“Why?” said Hans, standing up, and looking serious again.

“Because she may get into such a position that her face is likely to be recognised. Mrs Meyrick and I are anxious for her that she should be known as an admirable singer. It is right, and she wishes it, that she should make herself independent. And she has excellent chances. One good introduction is secured already. And I am going to speak to Klesmer. Her face may come to be very well known, and

—well, it is useless to attempt to explain, unless you feel as I do. I believe that if Mirah saw the circumstances clearly, she would strongly object to being exhibited in this way—to allowing herself to be used as a model for a heroine of this sort.”

As Hans stood with his thumbs in the belt of his blouse listening to this speech, his face showed a growing surprise melting into amusement, that at last would have its way in an explosive laugh; but seeing that Deronda looked gravely offended, he checked himself to say, “Excuse my laughing, Deronda. You never gave me an advantage over you before. If it had been about anything but my own pictures, I should have swallowed every word, because you said it. And so you actually believe that I should get my five pictures hung on the line in a conspicuous position, and carefully studied by the public? Zounds, man! cider-cup and conceit never gave me half such a beautiful dream. My pictures are likely to remain as private as the utmost hypersensitiveness could desire.”

Hans turned to paint again as a way of filling up awkward pauses. Deronda stood perfectly still, recognising his mistake as to publicity, but also conscious that his repugnance was not much

diminished. He was the reverse of satisfied either with himself or with Hans ; but the power of being quiet carries a man well through moments of embarrassment. Hans had a reverence for his friend which made him feel a sort of shyness at Deronda's being in the wrong ; but it was not in his nature to give up anything readily, though it were only a whim—or rather, especially if it were a whim, and he presently went on, painting the while—

“But even supposing I had a public rushing after my pictures as if they were a railway series including nurses, babies, and bonnet-boxes, I can't see any justice in your objection. Every painter worth remembering has painted the face he admired most, as often as he could. It is a part of his soul that goes out into his pictures. He diffuses its influence in that way. He puts what he hates into a caricature. He puts what he adores into some sacred, heroic form. If a man could paint the woman he loves a thousand times as the *Stella Maris* to put courage into the sailors on board a thousand ships, so much the more honour to her. Isn't that better than painting a piece of staring immodesty and calling it by a worshipful name ?”

“Every objection can be answered if you take

broad ground enough, Hans : no special question of conduct can be properly settled in that way," said Deronda, with a touch of peremptoriness. "I might admit all your generalities, and yet be right in saying you ought not to publish Mirah's face as a model for Berenice. But I give up the question of publicity. I was unreasonable there." Deronda hesitated a moment. "Still, even as a private affair, there might be good reasons for your not indulging yourself too much in painting her from the point of view you mention. You must feel that her situation at present is a very delicate one ; and until she is in more independence, she should be kept as carefully as a bit of Venetian glass, for fear of shaking her out of the safe place she is lodged in. Are you quite sure of your own discretion? Excuse me, Hans. My having found her binds me to watch over her. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly," said Hans, turning his face into a good-humoured smile. "You have the very justifiable opinion of me that I am likely to shatter all the glass in my way, and break my own skull into the bargain. Quite fair. Since I got into the scrape of being born, everything I have liked best has been a scrape either for myself or somebody else. Everything I have taken to heartily has somehow

turned into a scrape. My painting is the last scrape ; and I shall be all my life getting out of it. You think now I shall get into a scrape at home. No ; I am regenerate. You think I must be over head and ears in love with Mirah. Quite right ; so I am. But you think I shall scream and plunge and spoil everything. There you are mistaken — excusably, but transcendently mistaken. I have undergone baptism by immersion. Awe takes care of me. Ask the little mother.”

“ You don’t reckon a hopeless love among your scrapes, then ? ” said Deronda, whose voice seemed to get deeper as Hans’s went higher.

“ I don’t mean to call mine hopeless,” said Hans, with provoking coolness, laying down his tools, thrusting his thumbs into his belt, and moving away a little, as if to contemplate his picture more deliberately.

“ My dear fellow, you are only preparing misery for yourself,” said Deronda, decisively. “ She would not marry a Christian, even if she loved him. Have you heard her—of course you have—heard her speak of her people and her religion ? ”

“ That can’t last,” said Hans. “ She will see no Jew who is tolerable. Every male of that race is insupportable,—‘ insupportably advancing’—his nose.”

"She may rejoin her family. That is what she longs for. Her mother and brother are probably strict Jews."

"I'll turn proselyte if she wishes it," said Hans, with a shrug and a laugh.

"Don't talk nonsense, Hans. I thought you professed a serious love for her," said Deronda, getting heated.

"So I do. You think it desperate, but I don't."

"I know nothing; I can't tell what has happened. We must be prepared for surprises. But I can hardly imagine a greater surprise to me than that there should have seemed to be anything in Mirah's sentiments for you to found a romantic hope on." Deronda felt that he was too contemptuous.

"I don't found my romantic hopes on a woman's sentiments," said Hans, perversely inclined to be the merrier when he was addressed with gravity. "I go to science and philosophy for my romance. Nature designed Mirah to fall in love with me. The amalgamation of races demands it—the mitigation of human ugliness demands it—the affinity of contrasts assures it. I am the utmost contrast to Mirah—a bleached Christian, who can't sing two notes in tune. Who has a chance against me?"

"I see now ; it was all *persiflage*. You don't mean a word of what you say, Meyrick," said Deronda, laying his hand on Meyrick's shoulder, and speaking in a tone of cordial relief. "I was a wiseacre to answer you seriously."

"Upon my honour I do mean it, though," said Hans, facing round and laying his left hand on Deronda's shoulder, so that their eyes fronted each other closely. "I am at the confessional. I meant to tell you as soon as you came. My mother says you are Mirah's guardian, and she thinks herself responsible to you for every breath that falls on Mirah in her house. Well, I love her—I worship her—I won't despair—I mean to deserve her."

"My dear fellow, you can't do it," said Deronda, quickly.

"I should have said, I mean to try."

"You can't keep your resolve, Hans. You used to resolve what you would do for your mother and sisters."

"You have a right to reproach me, old fellow," said Hans, gently.

"Perhaps I am ungenerous," said Deronda, not apologetically, however. "Yet it can't be ungenerous to warn you that you are indulging mad, Quixotic expectations."

“Who will be hurt but myself, then?” said Hans, putting out his lip. “I am not going to say anything to her, unless I felt sure of the answer. I dare not ask the oracles: I prefer a cheerful caliginosity, as Sir Thomas Browne might say. I would rather run my chance there and lose, than be sure of winning anywhere else. And I don’t mean to swallow the poison of despair, though you are disposed to thrust it on me. I am giving up wine, so let me get a little drunk on hope and vanity.”

“With all my heart, if it will do you any good,” said Deronda, loosing Hans’s shoulder, with a little push. He made his tone kindly, but his words were from the lip only. As to his real feeling he was silenced.

He was conscious of that peculiar irritation which will sometimes befall the man whom others are inclined to trust as a mentor—the irritation of perceiving that he is supposed to be entirely off the same plane of desire and temptation as those who confess to him. Our guides, we pretend, must be sinless: as if those were not often the best teachers who only yesterday got corrected for their mistakes. Throughout their friendship Deronda had been used to Hans’s egotism, but he had never before felt intolerant of it: when Hans,

habitually pouring out his own feelings and affairs, had never cared for any detail in return, and, if he chanced to know any, had soon forgotten it, Deronda had been inwardly as well as outwardly indulgent—nay, satisfied. But now he noted with some indignation, all the stronger because it must not be betrayed, Hans's evident assumption that for any danger of rivalry or jealousy in relation to Mirah, Deronda was as much out of the question as the angel Gabriel. It is one thing to be resolute in placing one's self out of the question, and another to endure that others should perform that exclusion for us. He had expected that Hans would give him trouble: what he had not expected was that the trouble would have a strong element of personal feeling. And he was rather ashamed that Hans's hopes caused him uneasiness in spite of his well-warranted conviction that they would never be fulfilled. They had raised an image of Mirah changing; and however he might protest that the change would not happen, the protest kept up the unpleasant image. Altogether, poor Hans seemed to be entering into Deronda's experience in a disproportionate manner—going beyond his part of rescued prodigal, and rousing a feeling quite distinct from compassionate affection.

When Deronda went to Chelsea he was not made as comfortable as he ought to have been by Mrs Meyrick's evident release from anxiety about the beloved but incalculable son. Mirah seemed livelier than before, and for the first time he saw her laugh. It was when they were talking of Hans, he being naturally the mother's first topic. Mirah wished to know if Deronda had seen Mr Hans going through a sort of character piece without changing his dress.

"He passes from one figure to another as if he were a bit of flame, where you fancied the figures without seeing them," said Mirah, full of her subject; "he is so wonderfully quick. I used never to like comic things on the stage—they were dwelt on too long; but all in one minute Mr Hans makes himself a blind bard, and then Rienzi addressing the Romans, and then an opera-dancer, and then a desponding young gentleman—I am sorry for them all, and yet I laugh, all in one"—here Mirah gave a little laugh that might have entered into a song.

"We hardly thought that Mirah could laugh till Hans came," said Mrs Meyrick, seeing that Deronda, like herself, was observing the pretty picture.

"Hans seems in great force just now," said

Deronda, in a tone of congratulation. "I don't wonder at his enlivening you."

"He's been just perfect ever since he came back," said Mrs Meyrick, keeping to herself the next clause—"if it will but last."

"It is a great happiness," said Mirah, "to see the son and brother come into this dear home. And I hear them all talk about what they did together when they were little. That seems like heaven, to have a mother and brother who talk in that way. I have never had it."

"Nor I," said Deronda, involuntarily.

"No?" said Mirah, regretfully. "I wish you had. I wish you had had every good." The last words were uttered with a serious ardour as if they had been part of a litany, while her eyes were fixed on Deronda, who with his elbow on the back of his chair was contemplating her by the new light of the impression she had made on Hans, and the possibility of her being attracted by that extraordinary contrast. It was no more than what had happened on each former visit of his, that Mirah appeared to enjoy speaking of what she felt very much as a little girl fresh from school pours forth spontaneously all the long-repressed chat for which she has found willing ears. For the first time in her life Mirah was

among those whom she entirely trusted, and her original visionary impression that Deronda was a divinely-sent messenger hung about his image still, stirring always anew the disposition to reliance and openness. It was in this way she took what might have been the injurious flattery of admiring attention into which her helpless dependence had been suddenly transformed: every one around her watched for her looks and words, and the effect on her was simply that of having passed from a stifling imprisonment into an exhilarating air which made speech and action a delight. To her mind it was all a gift from others' goodness. But that word of Deronda's implying that there had been some lack in his life which might be compared with anything she had known in hers, was an entirely new inlet of thought about him. After her first expression of sorrowful surprise she went on—

“But Mr Hans said yesterday that you thought so much of others you hardly wanted anything for yourself. He told us a wonderful story of Bouddha giving himself to the famished tigress to save her and her little ones from starving. And he said you were like Bouddha. That is what we all imagine of you.”

“Pray don't imagine that,” said Deronda, who

had lately been finding such suppositions rather exasperating. "Even if it were true that I thought so much of others, it would not follow that I had no wants for myself. When Bouddha let the tigress eat him he might have been very hungry himself."

"Perhaps if he was starved he would not mind so much about being eaten," said Mab, shyly.

"Please don't think that, Mab; it takes away the beauty of the action," said Mirah.

"But if it were true, Mirah?" said the rational Amy, having a half-holiday from her teaching; "you always take what is beautiful as if it were true."

"So it is," said Mirah, gently. "If people have thought what is the most beautiful and the best thing, it must be true. It is always there."

"Now, Mirah, what *do* you mean?" said Amy.

"I understand her," said Deronda, coming to the rescue. "It is a truth in thought though it may never have been carried out in action. It lives as an idea. Is that it?" He turned to Mirah, who was listening with a blind look in her lovely eyes.

"It must be that, because you understand me, but I cannot quite explain," said Mirah, rather abstractedly—still searching for some expression.

"But *was* it beautiful for Bouddha to let the tiger eat him?" said Amy, changing her ground.

"It would be a bad pattern."

"The world would get full of fat tigers," said Mab.

Deronda laughed, but defended the myth. "It is like a passionate word," he said; "the exaggeration is a flash of fervour. It is an extreme image of what is happening every day—the transmutation of self."

"I think I can say what I mean, now," said Mirah, who had not heard the intermediate talk. "When the best thing comes into our thoughts, it is like what my mother has been to me. She has been just as really with me as all the other people about me—often more really with me."

Deronda, inwardly wincing under this illustration, which brought other possible realities about that mother vividly before him, presently turned the conversation by saying, "But we must not get too far away from practical matters. I came, for one thing, to tell of an interview I had yesterday, which I hope Mirah will find to have been useful to her. It was with Klesmer, the great pianist."

"Ah?" said Mrs Meyrick, with satisfaction. "You think he will help her?"

"I hope so. He is very much occupied, but has promised to fix a time for receiving and hearing Miss Lapidoth, as we must learn to call her"—here Deronda smiled at Mirah—"if she consents to go to him."

"I shall be very grateful," said Mirah, calmly. "He wants to hear me sing, before he can judge whether I ought to be helped."

Deronda was struck with her plain sense about these matters of practical concern.

"It will not be at all trying to you, I hope, if Mrs Meyrick will kindly go with you to Klesmer's house."

"Oh no, not at all trying. I have been doing that all my life—I mean, told to do things that others may judge of me. And I have gone through a bad trial of that sort. I am prepared to bear it, and do some very small thing. Is Klesmer a severe man?"

"He is peculiar, but I have not had experience enough of him to know whether he would be what you would call severe. I know he is kind-hearted—kind in action, if not in speech."

"I have been used to be frowned at and not praised," said Mirah.

"By the by, Klesmer frowns a good deal," said Deronda, "but there is often a sort of smile in

his eyes all the while. Unhappily he wears spectacles, so you must catch him in the right light to see the smile."

"I shall not be frightened," said Mirah. "If he were like a roaring lion, he only wants me to sing. I shall do what I can."

"Then I feel sure you will not mind being invited to sing in Lady Mallinger's drawing-room," said Deronda. "She intends to ask you next month, and will invite many ladies to hear you, who are likely to want lessons from you for their daughters."

"How fast we are mounting!" said Mrs Meyrick, with delight. "You never thought of getting grand so quickly, Mirah."

"I am a little frightened at being called Miss Lapidoth," said Mirah, colouring with a new uneasiness. "Might I be called Cohen?"

"I understand you," said Deronda, promptly. 'But, I assure you, you must not be called Cohen. The name is inadmissible for a singer. This is one of the trifles in which we must conform to vulgar prejudice. We could choose some other name, however—such as singers ordinarily choose—an Italian or Spanish name, which would suit your *physique*.' To Deronda just now the name

Cohen was equivalent to the ugliest of yellow badges.

Mirah reflected a little, anxiously, then said, "No. If Cohen will not do, I will keep the name I have been called by. I will not hide myself. I have friends to protect me. And now—if my father were very miserable and wanted help—no," she said, looking at Mrs Meyrick, "I should think then, that he was perhaps crying as I used to see him, and had nobody to pity him, and I had hidden myself from him. He had none belonging to him but me. Others that made friends with him always left him."

"Keep to what you feel right, my dear child," said Mrs Meyrick. "*I* would not persuade you to the contrary." For her own part she had no patience or pity for that father, and would have left him to his crying.

Deronda was saying to himself, "I am rather base to be angry with Hans. How can he help being in love with her? But it is too absurdly presumptuous for him even to frame the idea of appropriating her, and a sort of blasphemy to suppose that she could possibly give herself to him."

What would it be for Daniel Deronda to enter-

tain such thoughts? He was not one who could quite naïvely introduce himself where he had just excluded his friend, yet it was undeniable that what had just happened made a new stage in his feeling towards Mirah. But apart from other grounds for self-repression, reasons both definite and vague made him shut away that question as he might have shut up a half-opened writing that would have carried his imagination too far and given too much shape to presentiments. Might there not come a disclosure which would hold the missing determination of his course? What did he really know about his origin? Strangely in these latter months when it seemed right that he should exert his will in the choice of a destination, the passion of his nature had got more and more locked by this uncertainty. The disclosure might bring its pain, indeed the likelihood seemed to him to be all on that side; but if it helped him to make his life a sequence which would take the form of duty—if it saved him from having to make an arbitrary selection where he felt no preponderance of desire? Still more he wanted to escape standing as a critic outside the activities of men, stiffened into the ridiculous attitude of self-assigned superiority. His chief tether was his early inwrought affection for Sir Hugo, making

him gratefully deferential to wishes with which he had little agreement; but gratitude had been sometimes disturbed by doubts which were near reducing it to a fear of being ungrateful. Many of us complain that half our birthright is sharp duty: Deronda was more inclined to complain that he was robbed of this half; yet he accused himself, as he would have accused another, of being weakly self-conscious and wanting in resolve. He was the reverse of that type painted for us in Faulconbridge and Edmund of Gloster, whose coarse ambition for personal success is inflamed by a defiance of accidental disadvantages. To Daniel the words Father and Mother had the altar-fire in them; and the thought of all closest relations of our nature held still something of the mystic power which had made his neck and ears burn in boyhood. The average man may regard this sensibility on the question of birth as preposterous and hardly credible; but with the utmost respect for his knowledge as the rock from which all other knowledge is hewn, it must be admitted that many well-proved facts are dark to the average man, even concerning the action of his own heart and the structure of his own retina. A century ago he and all his forefathers had not had the slightest notion of that electric discharge

by means of which they had all wagged their tongues mistakenly ; any more than they were awake to the secluded anguish of exceptional sensitiveness into which many a carelessly-begotten child of man is born.

Perhaps the ferment was all the stronger in Deronda's mind because he had never had a confidant to whom he could open himself on these delicate subjects. He had always been leaned on instead of being invited to lean. Sometimes he had longed for the sort of friend to whom he might possibly unfold his experience : a young man like himself who sustained a private grief and was not too confident about his own career ; speculative enough to understand every moral difficulty, yet socially susceptible, as he himself was, and having every outward sign of equality either in bodily or in spiritual wrestling ;—for he had found it impossible to reciprocate confidences with one who looked up to him. But he had no expectation of meeting the friend he imagined. Deronda's was not one of those quiveringlly-poised natures that lend themselves to second-sight.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

There be who hold that the deeper tragedy were a Prometheus Bound not *after* but *before* he had well got the celestial fire into the *νάρεθξ* whereby it might be conveyed to mortals: thrust by the Kratos and Bia of instituted methods into a solitude of despised ideas, fastened in throbbing helplessness by the fatal pressure of poverty and disease—a solitude where many pass by, but none regard.

“SECOND-SIGHT” is a flag over disputed ground. But it is matter of knowledge that there are persons whose yearnings, conceptions—nay, travelled conclusions—continually take the form of images which have a foreshadowing power: the deed they would do starts up before them in complete shape, making a coercive type; the event they hunger for or dread rises into vision with a seed-like growth, feeding itself fast on unnumbered impressions. They are not always the less capable of the argumentative process, nor less sane than the commonplace calculators of the market; sometimes it may be that their natures have manifold openings, like the hundred-gated Thebes,

where there may naturally be a greater and more miscellaneous inrush than through a narrow beadle-watched portal. No doubt there are abject specimens of the visionary, as there is a minim mammal which you might imprison in the finger of your glove. That small relative of the elephant has no harm in him ; but what great mental or social type is free from specimens whose insignificance is both ugly and noxious ? One is afraid to think of all that the genus "patriot" embraces ; or of the elbowing there might be at the day of judgment for those who ranked as Authors, and brought volumes either in their hands or on trucks.

This apology for inevitable kinship is meant to usher in some facts about Mordecai, whose figure had bitten itself into Deronda's mind as a new question which he felt an interest in getting answered. But the interest was no more than a vaguely expectant suspense : the consumptive-looking Jew, apparently a fervid student of some kind, getting his crust by a quiet handicraft, like Spinoza, fitted into none of Deronda's anticipations.

It was otherwise with the effect of their meeting on Mordecai. For many winters, while he had been conscious of an ebbing physical life, and

a widening spiritual loneliness, all his passionate desire had concentrated itself in the yearning for some young ear into which he could pour his mind as a testament, some soul kindred enough to accept the spiritual product of his own brief, painful life, as a mission to be executed. It was remarkable that the hopefulness which is often the beneficent illusion of consumptive patients, was in Mordecai wholly diverted from the prospect of bodily recovery and carried into the current of this yearning for transmission. The yearning, which had panted upward from out of overwhelming discouragements, had grown into a hope—the hope into a confident belief, which, instead of being checked by the clear conception he had of his hastening decline, took rather the intensity of expectant faith in a prophecy which has only brief space to get fulfilled in.

Some years had now gone since he had first begun to measure men with a keen glance, searching for a possibility which became more and more a distinct conception. Such distinctness as it had at first was reached chiefly by a method of contrast: he wanted to find a man who differed from himself. Tracing reasons in that self for the rebuffs he had met with and the hindrances

that beset him, he imagined a man who would have all the elements necessary for sympathy with him, but in an embodiment unlike his own: he must be a Jew, intellectually cultured, morally fervid—in all this a nature ready to be plenished from Mordecai's; but his face and frame must be beautiful and strong, he must have been used to all the refinements of social life, his voice must flow with a full and easy current, his circumstances be free from sordid need: he must glorify the possibilities of the Jew, not sit and wander as Mordecai did, bearing the stamp of his people amid the signs of poverty and waning breath. Sensitive to physical characteristics, he had, both abroad and in England, looked at pictures as well as men, and in a vacant hour he had sometimes lingered in the National Gallery in search of paintings which might feed his hopefulness with grave and noble types of the human form, such as might well belong to men of his own race. But he returned in disappointment. The instances are scattered but thinly over the galleries of Europe, in which the fortune or selection even of the chief masters has given to Art a face at once young, grand, and beautiful, where, if there is any melancholy, it is no feeble passivity, but enters into the foreshadowed capability of heroism.

Some observant persons may perhaps remember his emaciated figure, and dark eyes deep in their sockets, as he stood in front of a picture that had touched him either to new or habitual meditation: he commonly wore a cloth cap with black fur round it, which no painter would have asked him to take off. But spectators would be likely to think of him as an odd-looking Jew, who probably got money out of pictures; and Mordecai, when he noticed them, was perfectly aware of the impression he made. Experience had rendered him morbidly alive to the effect of a man's poverty and other physical disadvantages in cheapening his ideas, unless they are those of a Peter the Hermit who has a tocsin for the rabble. But he was too sane and generous to attribute his spiritual banishment solely to the excusable prejudices of others: certain incapacities of his own had made the sentence of exclusion; and hence it was that his imagination had constructed another man who would be something more ample than the second soul bestowed, according to the notion of the Cabbalists, to help out the insufficient first—who would be a blooming human life, ready to incorporate all that was worthiest in an existence whose visible, palpable part was burning itself fast away. His inward need for the conception

of this expanded, prolonged self was reflected as an outward necessity. The thoughts of his heart (that ancient phrase best shadows the truth) seemed to him too precious, too closely inwoven with the growth of things not to have a further destiny. And as the more beautiful, the stronger, the more executive self took shape in his mind, he loved it beforehand with an affection half identifying, half contemplative and grateful.

Mordecai's mind wrought so constantly in images, that his coherent trains of thought often resembled the significant dreams attributed to sleepers by waking persons in their most inventive moments ; nay, they often resembled genuine dreams in their way of breaking off the passage from the known to the unknown. Thus, for a long while, he habitually thought of the Being answering to his need as one distantly approaching or turning his back towards him, darkly painted against a golden sky. The reason of the golden sky lay in one of Mordecai's habits. He was keenly alive to some poetic aspects of London ; and a favourite resort of his, when strength and leisure allowed, was to some one of the bridges, especially about sunrise or sunset. Even when he was bending over watch-wheels and trinkets, or seated in a small upper room looking out on

dingy bricks and dingy cracked windows, his imagination spontaneously planted him on some spot where he had a far-stretching scene; his thought went on in wide spaces; and whenever he could, he tried to have in reality the influences of a large sky. Leaning on the parapet of Blackfriars Bridge, and gazing meditatively, the breadth and calm of the river, with its long vista half hazy, half luminous, the grand dim masses or tall forms of buildings which were the signs of world-commerce, the oncoming of boats and barges from the still distance into sound and colour, entered into his mood and blent themselves indistinguishably with his thinking, as a fine symphony to which we can hardly be said to listen makes a medium that bears up our spiritual wings. Thus it happened that the figure representative of Mordecai's longing was mentally seen darkened by the excess of light in the aerial background. But in the inevitable progress of his imagination towards fuller detail, he ceased to see the figure with its back towards him. It began to advance, and a face became discernible; the words youth, beauty, refinement, Jewish birth, noble gravity, turned into hardly individual but typical form and colour: gathered from his memory of faces seen among the Jews of Holland and Bohemia, and from

the paintings which revived that memory. Reverently let it be said of this mature spiritual need that it was akin to the boy's and girl's picturing of the future beloved; but the stirrings of such young desire are feeble compared with the passionate current of an ideal life straining to embody itself, made intense by resistance to imminent dissolution. The visionary form became a companion and auditor; keeping a place not only in the waking imagination, but in those dreams of lighter slumber of which it is truest to say, "I sleep, but my heart is awake" — when the disturbing trivial story of yesterday is charged with the impassioned purpose of years.

Of late the urgency of irredeemable time, measured by the gradual choking of life, had turned Mordecai's trust into an agitated watch for the fulfilment that must be at hand. Was the bell on the verge of tolling, the sentence about to be executed? The deliverer's footstep must be near—the deliverer who was to rescue Mordecai's spiritual travail from oblivion, and give it an abiding place in the best heritage of his people. An insane exaggeration of his own value, even if his ideas had been as true and precious as those of Columbus or Newton, many would have counted this

yearning, taking it as the sublimer part for a man to say, "If not I, then another," and to hold cheap the meaning of his own life. But the fuller nature desires to be an agent, to create, and not merely to look on : strong love hungers to bless, and not merely to behold blessing. And while there is warmth enough in the sun to feed an energetic life, there will still be men to feel, "I am lord of this moment's change, and will charge it with my soul."

But with that mingling of inconsequence which belongs to us all, and not unhappily, since it saves us from many effects of mistake, Mordecai's confidence in the friend to come did not suffice to make him passive, and he tried expedients, pathetically humble, such as happened to be within his reach, for communicating something of himself. It was now two years since he had taken up his abode under Ezra Cohen's roof, where he was regarded with much goodwill as a compound of workman, dominie, vessel of charity, inspired idiot, man of piety, and (if he were inquired into) dangerous heretic. During that time little Jacob had advanced into knickerbockers, and into that quickness of apprehension which has been already made manifest in relation to hardware and exchange. He had also advanced in attachment to Mordecai,

regarding him as an inferior, but liking him none the worse, and taking his helpful cleverness as he might have taken the services of an enslaved Djinn. As for Mordecai, he had given Jacob his first lessons, and his habitual tenderness easily turned into the teacher's fatherhood. Though he was fully conscious of the spiritual distance between the parents and himself, and would never have attempted any communication to them from his peculiar world, the boy moved him with that idealising affection which merges the qualities of the individual child in the glory of childhood and the possibilities of a long future. And this feeling had drawn him on, at first without premeditation, and afterwards with conscious purpose, to a sort of outpouring in the ear of the boy which might have seemed wild enough to any excellent man of business who overheard it. But none overheard when Jacob went up to Mordecai's room on a day, for example, in which there was little work to be done, or at an hour when the work was ended, and after a brief lesson in English reading or in numeration, was induced to remain standing at his teacher's knees, or chose to jump astride them, often to the patient fatigue of the wasted limbs. The inducement was perhaps the mending of a toy, or some little mechanical

device in which Mordecai's well-practised fingertips had an exceptional skill; and with the boy thus tethered, he would begin to repeat a Hebrew poem of his own, into which years before he had poured his first youthful ardours for that conception of a blended past and future which was the mistress of his soul, telling Jacob to say the words after him.

"The boy will get them engraved within him," thought Mordecai; "it is a way of printing."

None readier than Jacob at this fascinating game of imitating unintelligible words; and if no opposing diversion occurred, he would sometimes carry on his share in it as long as the teacher's breath would last out. For Mordecai threw into each repetition the fervour befitting a sacred occasion. In such instances, Jacob would show no other distraction than reaching out and surveying the contents of his pockets; or drawing down the skin of his cheeks to make his eyes look awful, and rolling his head to complete the effect; or alternately handling his own nose and Mordecai's as if to test the relation of their masses. Under all this the fervid reciter would not pause, satisfied if the young organs of speech would submit themselves. But most commonly a sudden impulse sent Jacob leaping away into some antic

or active amusement, when, instead of following the recitation, he would return upon the foregoing words most ready to his tongue, and mouth or gabble, with a see-saw suited to the action of his limbs, a verse on which Mordecai had spent some of his too scanty heart's blood. Yet he waited with such patience as a prophet needs, and began his strange printing again undiscouraged on the morrow, saying inwardly—

“My words may rule him some day. Their meaning may flash out on him. It is so with a nation—after many days.”

Meanwhile Jacob's sense of power was increased and his time enlivened by a store of magical articulation with which he made the baby crow, or drove the large cat into a dark corner, or promised himself to frighten any incidental Christian of his own years. One week he had unfortunately seen a street mountebank, and this carried off his muscular imitativeness in sad divergence from New Hebrew poetry after the model of Jehuda ha-Levi. Mordecai had arrived at a fresh passage in his poem; for as soon as Jacob had got well used to one portion, he was led on to another, and a fresh combination of sounds generally answered better in keeping him fast for a few minutes. The consumptive voice, originally a strong high baritone,

with its variously mingling hoarseness, like a haze amidst illuminations, and its occasional incipient gasp, had more than the usual excitement, while it gave forth Hebrew verses with a meaning something like this :—

“ Away from me the garment of forgetfulness,
Withering the heart ;
The oil and wine from presses of the Goyim,
Poisoned with scorn.
Solitude is on the sides of Mount Nebo,
In its heart a tomb :
There the buried ark and golden cherubim
Make hidden light :
There the solemn faces gaze unchanged,
The wings are spread unbroken :
Shut beneath in silent awful speech
The Law lies graven.
Solitude and darkness are my covering,
And my heart a tomb ;
Smite and shatter it, O Gabriel !
Shatter it as the clay of the founder
Around the golden image.”

In the absorbing enthusiasm with which Mordecai had intoned rather than spoken this last invocation, he was unconscious that Jacob had ceased to follow him and had started away from his knees ; but pausing he saw, as by a sudden flash, that the lad had thrown himself on his hands with his feet in the air, mountebank fashion, and was picking up with his lips a bright farthing which was a favourite among his pocket

treasures. This might have been reckoned among the tricks Mordecai was used to, but at this moment it jarred him horribly, as if it had been a Satanic grin upon his prayer.

"Child! child!" he called out with a strange cry that startled Jacob to his feet, and then he sank backward with a shudder, closing his eyes.

"What?" said Jacob, quickly. Then, not getting an immediate answer, he pressed Mordecai's knees with a shaking movement, in order to rouse him. Mordecai opened his eyes with a fierce expression in them, leaned forward, grasped the little shoulders, and said in a quick, hoarse whisper—

"A curse is on your generation, child. They will open the mountain and drag forth the golden wings and coin them into money, and the solemn faces they will break up into ear-rings for wanton women! And they shall get themselves a new name, but the angel of ignominy, with the fiery brand, shall know them, and their heart shall be the tomb of dead desires that turn their life to rottenness."

The aspect and action of Mordecai were so new and mysterious to Jacob—they carried such a burthen of obscure threat—it was as if the patient, indulgent companion had turned into

something unknown and terrific: the sunken dark eyes and hoarse accents close to him, the thin grappling fingers, shook Jacob's little frame into awe, and while Mordecai was speaking he stood trembling with a sense that the house was tumbling in and they were not going to have dinner any more. But when the terrible speech had ended and the pinch was relaxed, the shock resolved itself into tears; Jacob lifted up his small patriarchal countenance and wept aloud. This sign of childish grief at once recalled Mordecai to his usual gentle self: he was not able to speak again at present, but with a maternal action he drew the curly head towards him and pressed it tenderly against his breast. On this Jacob, feeling the danger wellnigh over, howled at ease, beginning to imitate his own performance and improve upon it—a sort of transition from impulse into art often observable. Indeed, the next day he undertook to terrify Adelaide Rebekah in like manner, and succeeded very well.

But Mordecai suffered a check which lasted long, from the consciousness of a misapplied agitation; sane as well as excitable, he judged severely his moments of aberration into futile eagerness, and felt discredited with himself. All the more his mind was strained towards the dis-

cernment of that friend to come, with whom he would have a calm certainty of fellowship and understanding.

It was just then that, in his usual mid-day guardianship of the old book-shop, he was struck by the appearance of Deronda, and it is perhaps comprehensible now why Mordecai's glance took on a sudden eager interest as he looked at the new-comer: he saw a face and frame which seemed to him to realise the long-conceived type. But the disclaimer of Jewish birth was for the moment a backward thrust of double severity, the particular disappointment tending to shake his confidence in the more indefinite expectation. Nevertheless, when he found Deronda seated at the Cohens' table, the disclaimer was for the moment nullified: the first impression returned with added force, seeming to be guaranteed by this second meeting under circumstances more peculiar than the former; and in asking Deronda if he knew Hebrew, Mordecai was so possessed by the new inrush of belief, that he had forgotten the absence of any other condition to the fulfilment of his hopes. But the answering "No" struck them all down again, and the frustration was more painful than before. After turning his back on the visitor that Sabbath evening, Mordecai went through days of

a deep discouragement, like that of men on a doomed ship who, having strained their eyes after a sail, and beheld it with rejoicing, behold it never advance, and say, "Our sick eyes make it." But the long - contemplated figure had come as an emotional sequence of Mordecai's firmest theoretic convictions; it had been wrought from the imagery of his most passionate life; and it inevitably reappeared—reappeared in a more specific self-asserting form than ever. Deronda had that sort of resemblance to the preconceived type which a finely individual bust or portrait has to the more generalised copy left in our minds after a long interval: we renew our memory with delight, but we hardly know with how much correction. And now, his face met Mordecai's inward gaze as if it had always belonged to the awaited friend, raying out, moreover, some of that influence which belongs to breathing flesh; till by-and-by it seemed that discouragement had turned into a new obstinacy of resistance, and the ever-recurrent vision had the force of an outward call to disregard counter - evidence, and keep expectation awake. It was Deronda now who was seen in the often painful night-watches, when we are all liable to be held with the clutch of a single thought—whose figure, never with its back turned, was seen in

moments of soothed reverie or soothed dozing, painted on that golden sky which was the doubly blessed symbol of advancing day and of approaching rest.

Mordecai knew that the nameless stranger was to come and redeem his ring; and, in spite of contrary chances, the wish to see him again was growing into a belief that he should see him. In the January weeks, he felt an increasing agitation of that subdued hidden quality which hinders nervous people from any steady occupation on the eve of an anticipated change. He could not go on with his printing of Hebrew on little Jacob's mind; or with his attendance at a weekly club, which was another effort of the same forlorn hope: something else was coming. The one thing he longed for was to get as far as the river, which he could do but seldom and with difficulty. He yearned with a poet's yearning for the wide sky, the far-reaching vista of bridges, the tender and fluctuating lights on the water which seems to breathe with a life that can shiver and mourn, be comforted and rejoice.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"Vor den Wissenden sich stellen
 Sicher ist's in allen Fällen !
 Wenn du lange dich gequälet
 Weiss er gleich wo dir es fehlet ;
 Auch auf Beifall darfst du hoffen,
 Denn er weiss wo du's getroffen."

—GOETHE: *West-östlicher Divan*.

MOMENTOUS things happened to Deronda the very evening of that visit to the small house at Chelsea, when there was the discussion about Mirah's public name. But for the family group there, what appeared to be the chief sequence connected with it occurred two days afterwards. About four o'clock wheels paused before the door, and there came one of those knocks with an accompanying ring which serve to magnify the sense of social existence in a region where the most enlivening signals are usually those of the muffin-man. All the girls were at home, and the two rooms were thrown together to make space for Kate's drawing, as well as a great length of em-

broidery which had taken the place of the satin cushions — a sort of *pièce de résistance* in the courses of needlework, taken up by any clever fingers that happened to be at liberty. It stretched across the front room picturesquely enough, Mrs Meyrick bending over it at one corner, Mab in the middle, and Amy at the other end. Mirah, whose performances in point of sewing were on the makeshift level of the tailor-bird's, her education in that branch having been much neglected, was acting as reader to the party, seated on a camp-stool; in which position she also served Kate as model for a title-page vignette, symbolising a fair public absorbed in the successive volumes of the Family Tea-table. She was giving forth with charming distinctness the delightful Essay of Elia, *The Praise of Chimney-Sweeps*, and all were smiling over the "innocent blacknesses," when the imposing knock and ring called their thoughts to loftier spheres, and they looked up in wonderment.

"Dear me!" said Mrs Meyrick; "can it be Lady Mallinger? Is there a grand carriage, Amy?"

"No — only a hansom cab. It must be a gentleman."

"The Prime Minister, I should think," said

Kate, drily. "Hans says the greatest man in London may get into a hansom cab."

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried Mab. "Suppose it should be Lord Russell!"

The five bright faces were all looking amused when the old maid-servant bringing in a card distractedly left the parlour-door open, and there was seen bowing towards Mrs Meyrick a figure quite unlike that of the respected Premier—tall and physically impressive even in his kid and kerseymere, with massive face, flamboyant hair, and gold spectacles: in fact, as Mrs Meyrick saw from the card, *Julius Klesmer*.

Even embarrassment could hardly have made the "little mother" awkward, but quick in her perceptions she was at once aware of the situation, and felt well satisfied that the great personage had come to Mirah instead of requiring her to come to him; taking it as a sign of active interest. But when he entered, the rooms shrank into closets, the cottage piano, Mab thought, seemed a ridiculous toy, and the entire family existence as petty and private as an establishment of mice in the Tuileries. Klesmer's personality, especially his way of glancing round him, immediately suggested vast areas and a multitudinous audience, and probably they made the usual scenery of his

consciousness, for we all of us carry on our thinking in some habitual *locus* where there is a presence of other souls, and those who take in a larger sweep than their neighbours are apt to seem mightily vain and affected. Klesmer was vain, but not more so than many contemporaries of heavy aspect, whose vanity leaps out and startles one like a spear out of a walking-stick; as to his carriage and gestures, these were as natural to him as the length of his fingers; and the rankest affectation he could have shown would have been to look diffident and demure. While his grandiose air was making Mab feel herself a ridiculous toy to match the cottage piano, he was taking in the details around him with a keen and thoroughly kind sensibility. He remembered a home no larger than this on the outskirts of Bohemia; and in the figurative Bohemia too he had had large acquaintance with the variety and romance which belong to small incomes. He addressed Mrs Meyrick with the utmost deference.

“I hope I have not taken too great a freedom. Being in the neighbourhood, I ventured to save time by calling. Our friend Mr Deronda mentioned to me an understanding that I was to have the honour of becoming acquainted with a young lady here—Miss Lapidoth.”

Klesmer had really discerned Mirah in the first moment of entering, but with subtle politeness he looked round bowingly at the three sisters as if he were uncertain which was the young lady in question.

"Those are my daughters: this is Miss Lapidoth," said Mrs Meyrick, waving her hand towards Mirah.

"Ah," said Klesmer, in a tone of gratified expectation, turning a radiant smile and deep bow to Mirah, who, instead of being in the least taken by surprise, had a calm pleasure in her face. She liked the look of Klesmer, feeling sure that he would scold her, like a great musician and a kind man.

"You will not object to beginning our acquaintance by singing to me," he added, aware that they would all be relieved by getting rid of preliminaries.

"I shall be very glad. It is good of you to be willing to listen to me," said Mirah, moving to the piano. "Shall I accompany myself?"

"By all means," said Klesmer, seating himself, at Mrs Meyrick's invitation, where he could have a good view of the singer. The acute little mother would not have acknowledged the weakness, but she really said to herself, "He will like her singing better if he sees her."

All the feminine hearts except Mirah's were beating fast with anxiety, thinking Klesmer terrific as he sat with his listening frown on, and only daring to look at him furtively. If he did say anything severe it would be so hard for them all. They could only comfort themselves with thinking that Prince Camaralzaman, who had heard the finest things, preferred Mirah's singing to any other:—also she appeared to be doing her very best, as if she were more instead of less at ease than usual.

The song she had chosen was a fine setting of some words selected from Leopardi's grand Ode to Italy:—

*“ O patria mia, vedo le mura e gli archi
E le colonne e i simulacri e l'erme
Torri degli avi nostri ”—*

This was recitative: then followed—

“ Ma la gloria non vedo ”—

a mournful melody, a rhythmic plaint. After this came a climax of devout triumph—passing from the subdued adoration of a happy Andante in the words—

*“ Beatissimi voi,
Che offriste il petto alle nemiche lance
Per amor di costei che al sol vi diede ”—*

to the joyous outburst of an exultant Allegro in—

“*Oh viva, oh viva :*

Beatissimi voi

Mentre nel mondo si favelli o scriva.”

When she had ended, Klesmer said after a moment—

“That is old Leo’s music.”

“Yes, he was my last master—at Vienna : so fierce and so good,” said Mirah, with a melancholy smile. “He prophesied that my voice would not do for the stage. And he was right.”

“Continue, if you please,” said Klesmer, putting out his lips and shaking his long fingers, while he went on with a smothered articulation quite unintelligible to the audience.

The three girls detested him unanimously for not saying one word of praise. Mrs Meyrick was a little alarmed.

Mirah, simply bent on doing what Klesmer desired, and imagining that he would now like to hear her sing some German, went through Prince Radzivill’s music to Gretchen’s songs in the Faust, one after the other, without any interrogatory pause. When she had finished he rose and walked to the extremity of the small space at command, then walked back to the piano, where Mirah had risen from her seat and stood looking towards him

with her little hands crossed before her, meekly awaiting judgment; then with a sudden unknitting of his brow and with beaming eyes, he put out his hand and said abruptly, "Let us shake hands: you are a musician."

Mab felt herself beginning to cry, and all the three girls held Klesmer adorable. Mrs Meyrick took a long breath.

But straightway the frown came again, the long hand, back uppermost, was stretched out in quite a different sense to touch with finger-tip the back of Mirah's, and with protruded lip he said—

"Not for great tasks. No high roofs. We are no skylarks. We must be modest." Klesmer paused here. And Mab ceased to think him adorable: 'as if Mirah had shown the least sign of conceit!'

Mirah was silent, knowing that there was a specific opinion to be waited for, and Klesmer presently went on—

"I would not advise—I would not further your singing in any larger space than a private drawing-room. But you will do there. And here in London that is one of the best careers open. Lessons will follow. Will you come and sing at a private concert at my house on Wednesday?"

"Oh, I shall be grateful," said Mirah, putting

her hands together devoutly. "I would rather get my bread in that way than by anything more public. I will try to improve. What should I work at most?"

Klesmer made a preliminary answer in noises which sounded like words bitten in two and swallowed before they were half out, shaking his fingers the while, before he said, quite distinctly, "I shall introduce you to Astorga: he is the foster-father of good singing and will give you advice." Then addressing Mrs Meyrick, he added, "Mrs Klesmer will call before Wednesday, with your permission.

"We shall feel that to be a great kindness," said Mrs Meyrick.

"You will sing to her," said Klesmer, turning again to Mirah. "She is a thorough musician, and has a soul with more ears to it than you will often get in a musician. Your singing will satisfy her:—

'Vor den Wissenden sich stellen'—

You know the rest?"

"'Sicher ist's in allen Fällen,'"

said Mirah, promptly. And Klesmer saying, "Schön!" put out his hand again as a good-bye.

He had certainly chosen the most delicate way of praising Mirah, and the Meyrick girls had now

given him all their esteem. But imagine Mab's feeling when, suddenly fixing his eyes on her, he said decisively, "That young lady is musical, I see!" She was a mere blush and sense of scorching.

"Yes," said Mirah on her behalf. "And she has a touch."

"Oh please, Mirah—a scramble, not a touch," said Mab, in anguish, with a horrible fear of what the next thing might be: this dreadfully divining personage—evidently Satan in grey trousers—might order her to sit down to the piano, and her heart was like molten wax in the midst of her. But this was cheap payment for her amazed joy when Klesmer said benignantly, turning to Mrs Meyrick, "Will she like to accompany Miss Lapidoth and hear the music on Wednesday?"

"There could hardly be a greater pleasure for her," said Mrs Meyrick. "She will be most glad and grateful."

Thereupon Klesmer bowed round to the three sisters more grandly than they had ever been bowed to before. Altogether it was an amusing picture—the little room with so much of its diagonal taken up in Klesmer's magnificent bend to the small feminine figures like images a little less than life-size, the grave Holbein faces on the

walls, as many as were not otherwise occupied, looking hard at this stranger who by his face seemed a dignified contemporary of their own, but whose garments seemed a deplorable mockery of the human form.

Mrs Meyrick could not help going out of the room with Klesmer and closing the door behind her. He understood her and said with a frowning nod—

“She will do : if she doesn’t attempt too much and her voice holds out, she can make an income. I know that is the great point : Deronda told me. You are taking care of her. She looks like a good girl.”

“She is an angel,” said the warm-hearted woman.

“No,” said Klesmer, with a playful nod ; “she is a pretty Jewess : the angels must not get the credit of her. But I think she has found a guardian angel,” he ended, bowing himself out in this amiable way.

The four young creatures had looked at each other mutely till the door banged and Mrs Meyrick re-entered. Then there was an explosion. Mab clapped her hands and danced everywhere inconveniently ; Mrs Meyrick kissed Mirah and blessed her ; Amy said emphatically, “We can

never get her a new dress before Wednesday !” and Kate exclaimed, “Thank heaven my table is not knocked over !”

Mirah had reseated herself on the music-stool without speaking, and the tears were rolling down her cheeks as she looked at her friends.

“Now, now, Mab !” said Mrs Meyrick ; “come and sit down reasonably and let us talk.”

“Yes, let us talk,” said Mab, cordially, coming back to her low seat and caressing her knees. “I am beginning to feel large again. Hans said he was coming this afternoon. I wish he had been here—only there would have been no room for him. Mirah, what are you looking sad for ?”

“I am too happy,” said Mirah. “I feel so full of gratitude to you all ; and he was so very kind.”

“Yes, at last,” said Mab, sharply. “But he might have said something encouraging sooner. I thought him dreadfully ugly when he sat frowning, and only said, ‘Continue.’ I hated him all the long way from the top of his hair to the toe of his polished boot.”

“Nonsense, Mab ; he has a splendid profile,” said Kate.

“Now, but not *then*. I cannot bear people to keep their minds bottled up for the sake of letting them off with a pop. They seem to grudge

making you happy unless they can make you miserable beforehand. However, I forgive him everything," said Mab, with a magnanimous air, "because he has invited me. I wonder why he fixed on me as the musical one? Was it because I have a bulging forehead, ma, and peep from under it like a newt from under a stone?"

"It was your way of listening to the singing, child," said Mrs Meyrick. "He has magic spectacles and sees everything through them, depend upon it. But what was that German quotation you were so ready with, Mirah—you learned puss?"

"Oh, that was not learning," said Mirah, her tearful face breaking into an amused smile. "I said it so many times for a lesson. It means that it is safer to do anything—singing or anything else—before those who know and understand all about it."

"That was why you were not one bit frightened, I suppose," said Amy. "But now, what we have to talk about is a dress for you on Wednesday."

"I don't want anything better than this black merino," said Mirah, rising to show the effect. "Some white gloves and some new *bottines*." She put out her little foot, clad in the famous felt slipper.

"There comes Hans," said Mrs Meyrick. "Stand still, and let us hear what he says about the dress. Artists are the best people to consult about such things."

"You don't consult me, ma," said Kate, lifting up her eyebrow with a playful complainingness. "I notice mothers are like the people I deal with—the girls' doings are always priced low."

"My dear child, the boys are such a trouble—we could never put up with them, if we didn't make believe they were worth more," said Mrs Meyrick, just as her boy entered. "Hans, we want your opinion about Mirah's dress. A great event has happened. Klesmer has been here, and she is going to sing at his house on Wednesday among grand people. She thinks this dress will do."

"Let me see," said Hans. Mirah in her child-like way turned towards him to be looked at; and he, going to a little further distance, knelt with one knee on a hassock to survey her.

"This would be thought a very good stage-dress for me," she said, pleadingly, "in a part where I was to come on as a poor Jewess and sing to fashionable Christians."

"It would be effective," said Hans, with a con-

sidering air; "it would stand out well among the fashionable *chiffons*."

"But you ought not to claim all the poverty on your side, Mirah," said Amy. "There are plenty of poor Christians and dreadfully rich Jews and fashionable Jewesses."

"I didn't mean any harm," said Mirah. "Only I have been used to thinking about my dress for parts in plays. And I almost always had a part with a plain dress."

"That makes me think it questionable," said Hans, who had suddenly become as fastidious and conventional on this occasion as he had thought Deronda was, apropos of the Berenice-pictures. "It looks a little too theatrical. We must not make you a *rôle* of the poor Jewess—or of being a Jewess at all." Hans had a secret desire to neutralise the Jewess in private life, which he was in danger of not keeping secret.

"But it is what I am really. I am not pretending anything. I shall never be anything else," said Mirah. "I always feel myself a Jewess."

"But we can't feel that about you," said Hans, with a devout look. "What does it signify whether a perfect woman is a Jewess or not?"

"That is your kind way of praising me; I never was praised so before," said Mirah, with a smile, which was rather maddening to Hans and made him feel still more of a cosmopolitan.

"People don't think of me as a British Christian," he said, his face creasing merrily. "They think of me as an imperfectly handsome young man and an unpromising painter."

"But you are wandering from the dress," said Amy. "If that will not do, how are we to get another before Wednesday? and to-morrow Sunday?"

"Indeed this will do," said Mirah, entreatingly. "It is all real, you know," here she looked at Hans—"even if it seemed theatrical. Poor Berenice sitting on the ruins—any one might say that was theatrical, but I know that is just what she would do."

"I am a scoundrel," said Hans, overcome by this misplaced trust. "That is my invention. Nobody knows that she did that. Shall you forgive me for not saying so before?"

"Oh yes," said Mirah, after a momentary pause of surprise. "You knew it was what she would be sure to do—a Jewess who had not been faithful—who had done what she did and was penitent. She could have no joy but to afflict herself;

and where else would she go? I think it is very beautiful that you should enter so into what a Jewess would feel."

"The Jewesses of that time sat on ruins," said Hans, starting up with a sense of being checkmated. "That makes them convenient for pictures."

"But the dress—the dress," said Amy; "is it settled?"

"Yes; is it not?" said Mirah, looking doubtfully at Mrs Meyrick, who in her turn looked up at her son, and said, "What do you think, Hans?"

"That dress will not do," said Hans, decisively. "She is not going to sit on ruins. You must jump into a cab with her, little mother, and go to Regent Street. It's plenty of time to get anything you like—a black silk dress such as ladies wear. She must not be taken for an object of charity. She has talents to make people indebted to her."

"I think it is what Mr Deronda would like—for her to have a handsome dress," said Mrs Meyrick, deliberating.

"Of course it is," said Hans, with some sharpness. "You may take my word for what a gentleman would feel."

"I wish to do what Mr Deronda would like me to do," said Mirah, gravely, seeing that Mrs Meyrick looked towards her; and Hans, turning on his heel, went to Kate's table and took up one of her drawings as if his interest needed a new direction.

"Shouldn't you like to make a study of Klesmer's head, Hans?" said Kate. "I suppose you have often seen him?"

"Seen him!" exclaimed Hans, immediately throwing back his head and mane, seating himself at the piano and looking round him as if he were surveying an amphitheatre, while he held his fingers down perpendicularly towards the keys. But then in another instant he wheeled round on the stool, looked at Mirah and said, half timidly—"Perhaps you don't like this mimicry; you must always stop my nonsense when you don't like it."

Mirah had been smiling at the swiftly-made image, and she smiled still, but with a touch of something else than amusement, as she said—"Thank you. But you have never done anything I did not like. I hardly think he could, belonging to you," she added, looking at Mrs Meyrick.

In this way Hans got food for his hope. How could the rose help it when several bees in succession took its sweet odour as a sign of personal attachment?

CHAPTER XL.

“ Within the soul a faculty abides,
 That with interpositions, which would hide
 And darken, so can deal, that they become
 Contingencies of pomp ; and serve to exalt
 Her native brightness, as the ample moon,
 In the deep stillness of a summer even,
 Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
 Burns, like an unconsuming fire of light,
 In the green trees ; and, kindling on all sides
 Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
 Into a substance glorious as her own,
 Yea, with her own incorporated, by power
 Capacious and serene.”

—WORDSWORTH : *Excursion*, B. IV.

DERONDA came out of the narrow house at Chelsea in a frame of mind that made him long for some good bodily exercise to carry off what he was himself inclined to call the fumes of his temper. He was going towards the city, and the sight of the Chelsea Stairs with the waiting boats at once determined him to avoid the irritating inaction of being driven in a cab, by calling a wherry and taking an oar.

His errand was to go to Ram's book-shop, where

he had yesterday arrived too late for Mordecai's mid-day watch, and had been told that he invariably came there again between five and six. Some further acquaintance with this remarkable inmate of the Cohens was particularly desired by Deronda as a preliminary to redeeming his ring: he wished that their conversation should not again end speedily with that drop of Mordecai's interest which was like the removal of a drawbridge, and threatened to shut out any easy communication in future. As he got warmed with the use of the oar, fixing his mind on the errand before him and the ends he wanted to achieve on Mirah's account, he experienced, as was wont with him, a quick change of mental light, shifting his point of view to that of the person whom he had been thinking of hitherto chiefly as serviceable to his own purposes, and was inclined to taunt himself with being not much better than an enlisting sergeant, who never troubles himself with the drama that brings him the needful recruits.

"I suppose if I got from this man the information I am most anxious about," thought Deronda, "I should be contented enough if he felt no disposition to tell me more of himself, or why he seemed to have some expectation from me which was disappointed. The sort of curiosity he stirs

would die out; and yet it might be that he had neared and parted as one can imagine two ships doing, each freighted with an exile who would have recognised the other if the two could have looked out face to face. Not that there is any likelihood of a peculiar tie between me and this poor fellow, whose voyage, I fancy, must soon be over. But I wonder whether there is much of that momentous mutual missing between people who interchange blank looks, or even long for one another's absence in a crowded place. However, one makes one's self chances of missing by going on the recruiting-sergeant's plan."

When the wherry was approaching Blackfriars Bridge, where Deronda meant to land, it was half-past four, and the grey day was dying gloriously, its western clouds all broken into narrowing purple strata before a wide-spreading saffron clearness, which in the sky had a monumental calm, but on the river, with its changing objects, was reflected as a luminous movement, the alternate flash of ripples or currents, the sudden glow of the brown sail, the passage of laden barges from blackness into colour, making an active response to that brooding glory.

Feeling well heated by this time, Deronda gave up the oar and drew over him again his Inverness

cape. As he lifted up his head while fastening the topmost button, his eyes caught a well-remembered face looking towards him over the parapet of the bridge—brought out by the western light into startling distinctness and brilliancy—an illuminated type of bodily emaciation and spiritual eagerness. It was the face of Mordecai, who also, in his watch towards the west, had caught sight of the advancing boat, and had kept it fast within his gaze, at first simply because it was advancing, then with a recovery of impressions that made him quiver as with a presentiment, till at last the nearing figure lifted up its face towards him—the face of his visions—and then immediately, with white uplifted hand, beckoned again and again.

For Deronda, anxious that Mordecai should recognise and await him, had lost no time before signalling, and the answer came straightway. Mordecai lifted his cap and waved it—feeling in that moment that his inward prophecy was fulfilled. Obstacles, incongruities, all melted into the sense of completion with which his soul was flooded by this outward satisfaction of his longing. His exultation was not widely different from that of the experimenter, bending over the first stirrings of change that correspond to what in the fervour of concentrated prevision his thought has

foreshadowed. The prefigured friend had come from the golden background, and had signalled to him : this actually was : the rest was to be.

In three minutes Deronda had landed, had paid his boatman, and was joining Mordecai, whose instinct it was to stand perfectly still and wait for him.

“I was very glad to see you standing here,” said Deronda, “for I was intending to go on to the book-shop and look for you again. I was there yesterday—perhaps they mentioned it to you?”

“Yes,” said Mordecai ; “that was the reason I came to the bridge.”

This answer, made with simple gravity, was startlingly mysterious to Deronda. Were the peculiarities of this man really associated with any sort of mental alienation, according to Cohen’s hint?

“You knew nothing of my being at Chelsea?” he said after a moment.

“No : but I expected you to come down the river I have been waiting for you these five years.” Mordecai’s deep-sunk eyes were fixed on those of the friend who had at last arrived, with a look of affectionate dependence, at once pathetic and solemn. Deronda’s sensitiveness was not the less responsive because he could not but believe

that this strangely-disclosed relation was founded on an illusion.

"It will be a satisfaction to me if I can be of any real use to you," he answered very earnestly. "Shall we get into a cab and drive to—wherever you wish to go? You have probably had walking enough with your short breath."

"Let us go to the book-shop. It will soon be time for me to be there. But now look up the river," said Mordecai, turning again towards it and speaking in undertones of what may be called an excited calm—so absorbed by a sense of fulfilment that he was conscious of no barrier to a complete understanding between him and Deronda. "See the sky, how it is slowly fading. I have always loved this bridge: I stood on it when I was a little boy. It is a meeting-place for the spiritual messengers. It is true—what the Masters said—that each order of things has its angel: that means the full message of each from what is afar. Here I have listened to the messages of earth and sky; when I was stronger I used to stay and watch for the stars in the deep heavens. But this time just about sunset was always what I loved best. It has sunk into me and dwelt with me—fading, slowly fading: it was my own decline: it paused—it waited, till at last it

brought me my new life—my new self—who will live when this breath is all breathed out.”

Deronda did not speak. He felt himself strangely wrought upon. The first-prompted suspicion that Mordecai might be liable to hallucinations of thought—might have become a monomaniac on some subject which had given too severe a strain to his diseased organism—gave way to a more submissive expectancy. His nature was too large, too ready to conceive regions beyond his own experience, to rest at once in the easy explanation, “madness,” whenever a consciousness showed some fulness and conviction where his own was blank. It accorded with his habitual disposition that he should meet rather than resist any claim on him in the shape of another’s need; and this claim brought with it a sense of solemnity which seemed a radiation from Mordecai, as utterly nullifying his outward poverty and lifting him into authority as if he had been that preternatural guide seen in the universal legend, who suddenly drops his mean disguise and stands a manifest Power. That impression was the more sanctioned by a sort of resolved quietude which the persuasion of fulfilment had produced in Mordecai’s manner. After they had stood a moment in silence he said, “Let us go now;” and

when they were walking he added, "We will get down at the end of the street and walk to the shop. You can look at the books, and Mr Ram will be going away directly and leave us alone."

It seemed that this enthusiast was just as cautious, just as much alive to judgments in other minds as if he had been that antipole of all enthusiasm called "a man of the world."

While they were rattling along in the cab, Mirah was still present with Deronda in the midst of this strange experience, but he foresaw that the course of conversation would be determined by Mordecai, not by himself: he was no longer confident what questions he should be able to ask; and with a reaction on his own mood, he inwardly said, "I suppose I am in a state of complete superstition, just as if I were awaiting the destiny that could interpret the oracle. But some strong relation there must be between me and this man, since he feels it strongly. Great heaven! what relation has proved itself more potent in the world than faith even when mistaken—than expectation even when perpetually disappointed? Is my side of the relation to be disappointing or fulfilling?—well, if it is ever possible for me to fulfil, I will not disappoint."

In ten minutes the two men, with as intense a consciousness as if they had been two undeclared lovers, felt themselves alone in the small gas-lit book-shop and turned face to face, each baring his head from an instinctive feeling that they wished to see each other fully. Mordecai came forward to lean his back against the little counter, while Deronda stood against the opposite wall hardly more than four feet off. I wish I could perpetuate those two faces, as Titian's "Tribute Money" has perpetuated two types presenting another sort of contrast. Imagine—we all of us can—the pathetic stamp of consumption with its brilliancy of glance to which the sharply-defined structure of features, reminding one of a forsaken temple, give already a far-off look as of one getting unwillingly out of reach; and imagine it on a Jewish face naturally accentuated for the expression of an eager mind—the face of a man little above thirty, but with that age upon it which belongs to time lengthened by suffering, the hair and beard still black throwing out the yellow pallor of the skin, the difficult breathing giving more decided marking to the mobile nostril, the wasted yellow hands conspicuous on the folded arms: then give to the yearning consumptive glance something of the slowly dying mother's

look when her one loved son visits her bedside, and the flickering power of gladness leaps out as she says, "My boy!"—for the sense of spiritual perpetuation in another resembles that maternal transference of self.

Seeing such a portrait you would see Mordecai. And opposite to him was a face not more distinctively oriental than many a type seen among what we call the Latin races: rich in youthful health, and with a forcible masculine gravity in its repose, that gave the value of judgment to the reverence with which he met the gaze of this mysterious son of poverty who claimed him as a long-expected friend. The more exquisite quality of Deronda's nature—that keenly perceptive sympathetic emotiveness which ran along with his speculative tendency—was never more thoroughly tested. He felt nothing that could be called belief in the validity of Mordecai's impressions concerning him or in the probability of any greatly effective issue: what he felt was a profound sensibility to a cry from the depths of another soul; and accompanying that, the summons to be receptive instead of superciliously pre-judging. Receptiveness is a rare and massive power, like fortitude; and this state of mind now gave Deronda's face its utmost expression of

calm benignant force—an expression which nourished Mordecai's confidence and made an open way before him. He began to speak.

"You cannot know what has guided me to you and brought us together at this moment. You are wondering."

"I am not impatient," said Deronda. "I am ready to listen to whatever you may wish to disclose."

"You see some of the reasons why I needed you," said Mordecai, speaking quietly, as if he wished to reserve his strength. "You see that I am dying. You see that I am as one shut up behind bars by the wayside, who if he spoke to any would be met only by head-shaking and pity. The day is closing—the light is fading—soon we should not have been able to discern each other. But you have come in time."

"I rejoice that I am come in time," said Deronda, feelingly. He would not say, "I hope you are not mistaken in me,"—the very word "mistaken," he thought, would be a cruelty at that moment.

"But the hidden reasons why I need you began afar off," said Mordecai; "began in my early years when I was studying in another land. Then ideas, beloved ideas, came to me,

because I was a Jew. They were a trust to fulfil, because I was a Jew. They were an inspiration, because I was a Jew, and felt the heart of my race beating within me. They were my life ; I was not fully born till then. I counted this heart, and this breath, and this right hand"—Mordecai had pathetically pressed his hand against his breast, and then stretched its wasted fingers out before him—"I counted my sleep and my waking, and the work I fed my body with, and the sights that fed my eyes—I counted them but as fuel to the divine flame. But I had done as one who wanders and engraves his thought in rocky solitudes, and before I could change my course came care and labour and disease, and blocked the way before me, and bound me with the iron that eats itself into the soul. Then I said, 'How shall I save the life within me from being stifled with this stifled breath?'"

Mordecai paused to rest that poor breath which had been taxed by the rising excitement of his speech. And also he wished to check that excitement. Deronda dared not speak : the very silence in the narrow space seemed alive with mingled awe and compassion before this struggling fervour. And presently Mordecai went on—

"But you may misunderstand me. I speak

not as an ignorant dreamer—as one bred up in the inland valleys, thinking ancient thoughts anew and not knowing them ancient, never having stood by the great waters where the world's knowledge passes to and fro. English is my mother-tongue, England is the native land of this body, which is but as a breaking pot of earth around the fruit-bearing tree, whose seed might make the desert rejoice. But my true life was nourished in Holland, at the feet of my mother's brother, a Rabbi skilled in special learning ; and when he died I went to Hamburg to study, and afterwards to Göttingen, that I might take a larger outlook on my people, and on the Gentile world, and drink knowledge at all sources. I was a youth ; I felt free ; I saw our chief seats in Germany ; I was not then in utter poverty. And I had possessed myself of a handicraft. For I said, I care not if my lot be as that of Joshua ben Chananja : after the last destruction he earned his bread by making needles, but in his youth he had been a singer on the steps of the Temple, and had a memory of what was, before the glory departed. I said, let my body dwell in poverty, and my hands be as the hands of the toiler ; but let my soul be as a temple of remembrance where the treasures of knowledge enter and the inner

sanctuary is hope. I knew what I chose. They said, 'He feeds himself on visions,' and I denied not; for visions are the creators and feeders of the world. I see, I measure the world as it is, which the vision will create anew. You are not listening to one who raves aloof from the lives of his fellows."

Mordecai paused, and Deronda, feeling that the pause was expectant, said, "Do me the justice to believe that I was not inclined to call your words raving. I listen that I may know, without prejudice. I have had experience which gives me a keen interest in the story of a spiritual destiny embraced willingly, and embraced in youth."

"A spiritual destiny embraced willingly—in youth?" Mordecai repeated in a corrective tone. "It was the soul fully born within me, and it came in my boyhood. It brought its own world—a mediæval world, where there were men who made the ancient language live again in new psalms of exile. They had absorbed the philosophy of the Gentile into the faith of the Jew, and they still yearned toward a centre for our race. One of their souls was born again within me, and awaked amid the memories of their world. It travelled into Spain and Provence; it debated

with Aben-Ezra ; it took ship with Jehuda ha-Levi ; it heard the roar of the Crusaders and the shrieks of tortured Israel. And when its dumb tongue was loosed, it spoke the speech they had made alive with the new blood of their ardour, their sorrow, and their martyred trust : it sang with the cadence of their strain."

Mordecai paused again, and then said in a loud, hoarse whisper—

"While it is imprisoned in me, it will never learn another."

"Have you written entirely in Hebrew, then?" said Deronda, remembering with some anxiety the former question as to his own knowledge of that tongue.

"Yes—yes," said Mordecai, in a tone of deep sadness ; "in my youth I wandered toward that solitude, not feeling that it was a solitude. I had the ranks of the great dead around me ; the martyrs gathered and listened. But soon I found that the living were deaf to me. At first I saw my life spread as a long future : I said, part of my Jewish heritage is an unbreaking patience ; part is skill to seek divers methods and find a rooting-place where the planters despair. But there came new messengers from the Eternal. I had to bow under the yoke that presses on the great multitude born

of woman : family troubles called me—I had to work, to care, not for myself alone. I was left solitary again ; but already the angel of death had turned to me and beckoned, and I felt his skirts continually on my path. I loosed not my effort. I besought hearing and help. I spoke ; I went to men of our people—to the rich in influence or knowledge, to the rich in other wealth. But I found none to listen with understanding. I was rebuked for error ; I was offered a small sum in charity. No wonder. I looked poor ; I carried a bundle of Hebrew manuscript with me ; I said, our chief teachers are misleading the hope of our race. Scholar and merchant were both too busy to listen. Scorn stood as interpreter between me and them. One said, ‘The Book of Mormon would never have answered in Hebrew ; and if you mean to address our learned men, it is not likely you can teach them anything.’ He touched a truth there.”

The last words had a perceptible irony in their hoarsened tone.

“But though you had accustomed yourself to write in Hebrew, few, surely, can use English better,” said Deronda, wanting to hint consolation in a new effort for which he could smooth the way.

Mordecai shook his head slowly, and answered,

“Too late—too late. I can write no more. My writing would be like this gasping breath. But the breath may wake the fount of pity—the writing not. If I could write now and used English, I should be as one who beats a board to summon those who have been used to no signal but a bell. My soul has an ear to hear the faults of its own speech. New writing of mine would be like this body”—Mordecai spread his arms—“within it there might be the Ruach-ha-kodesh—the breath of divine thought—but men would smile at it and say, ‘A poor Jew!’—and the chief smilers would be of my own people.”

Mordecai let his hands fall, and his head sink in melancholy: for the moment he had lost hold of his hope. Despondency, conjured up by his own words, had floated in and hovered above him with eclipsing wings. He had sunk into momentary darkness.

“I feel with you—I feel strongly with you,” said Deronda, in a clear deep voice which was itself a cordial, apart from the words of sympathy. “But—forgive me if I speak hastily—for what you have actually written there need be no utter burial. The means of publication are within reach. If you will rely on me, I can assure you of all that is necessary to that end.”

"That is not enough," said Mordecai, quickly, looking up again with the flash of recovered memory and confidence. "That is not all my trust in you. You must be not only a hand to me, but a soul—believing my belief—being moved by my reasons—hoping my hope—seeing the vision I point to—beholding a glory where I behold it!"—Mordecai had taken a step nearer as he spoke, and now laid his hand on Deronda's arm with a tight grasp; his face little more than a foot off had something like a pale flame in it—an intensity of reliance that acted as a peremptory claim, while he went on—"You will be my life: it will be planted afresh; it will grow. You shall take the inheritance; it has been gathering for ages. The generations are crowding on my narrow life as a bridge: what has been and what is to be are meeting there; and the bridge is breaking. But I have found you. You have come in time. You will take the inheritance which the base son refuses because of the tombs which the plough and harrow may not pass over or the gold-seeker disturb: you will take the sacred inheritance of the Jew."

Deronda had become as pallid as Mordecai. Quick as an alarm of flood or fire, there spread within him not only a compassionate dread of

discouraging this fellow-man who urged a prayer as of one in the last agony, but also the opposing dread of fatally feeding an illusion, and being hurried on to a self-committal which might turn into a falsity. The peculiar appeal to his tenderness overcame the repulsion that most of us experience under a grasp and speech which assume to dominate. The difficulty to him was to inflict the accents of hesitation and doubt on this ardent suffering creature, who was crowding too much of his brief being into a moment of perhaps extravagant trust. With exquisite instinct, Deronda, before he opened his lips, placed his palm gently on Mordecai's straining hand—an act just then equal to many speeches. And after that he said, without haste, as if conscious that he might be wrong—

“Do you forget what I told you when we first saw each other? Do you remember that I said I was not of your race?”

“It can't be true,” Mordecai whispered immediately, with no sign of shock. The sympathetic hand still upon him had fortified the feeling which was stronger than those words of denial. There was a perceptible pause, Deronda feeling it impossible to answer, conscious indeed that the assertion, “It can't be true”—had the pressure of

argument for him. Mordecai, too entirely possessed by the supreme importance of the relation between himself and Deronda to have any other care in his speech, followed up that assertion by a second, which came to his lips as a mere sequence of his long-cherished conviction—

“You are not sure of your own origin.”

“How do you know that?” said Daniel, with an habitual shrinking which made him remove his hand from Mordecai’s, who also relaxed his hold, and fell back into his former leaning position.

“I know it—I know it; what is my life else?” said Mordecai, with a low cry of impatience. “Tell me everything: tell me why you deny.”

He could have no conception what that demand was to the hearer—how probingly it touched the hidden sensibility, the vividly conscious reticence of years; how the uncertainty he was insisting on as part of his own hope had always for Daniel been a threatening possibility of painful revelation about his mother. But the moment had influences which were not only new but solemn to Deronda: any evasion here might turn out to be a hateful refusal of some task that belonged to him, some act of due fellowship; in any case it would be a cruel rebuff to a being who was ap-

pealing to him as a forlorn hope under the shadow of a coming doom. After a few moments, he said, with a great effort over himself—determined to tell all the truth briefly—

“I have never known my mother. I have no knowledge about her. I have never called any man father. But I am convinced that my father is an Englishman.”

Deronda's deep tones had a tremor in them as he uttered this confession ; and all the while there was an under-current of amazement in him at the strange circumstances under which he uttered it. It seemed as if Mordecai were hardly overrating his own power to determine the action of the friend whom he had mysteriously chosen.

“It will be seen—it will be declared,” said Mordecai, triumphantly. “The world grows, and its frame is knit together by the growing soul ; dim, dim at first, then clearer and more clear, the consciousness discerns remote stirrings. As thoughts move within us darkly, and shake us before they are fully discerned—so events—so beings : they are knit with us in the growth of the world. You have risen within me like a thought not fully spelled : my soul is shaken before the words are all there. The rest will come—it will come.”

"We must not lose sight of the fact that the outward event has not always been a fulfilment of the firmest faith," said Deronda, in a tone that was made hesitating by the painfully conflicting desires, not to give any severe blow to Mordecai, and not to give his confidence a sanction which might have the severest of blows in reserve.

Mordecai's face, which had been illuminated to the utmost in that last declaration of his confidence, changed under Deronda's words, but not into any show of collapsed trust: the force did not disappear from the expression, but passed from the triumphant into the firmly resistant.

"You would remind me that I may be under an illusion—that the history of our people's trust has been full of illusion. I face it all." Here Mordecai paused a moment. Then bending his head a little forward, he said, in his hoarse whisper, "*So it might be with my trust, if you would make it an illusion. But you will not.*"

The very sharpness with which these words penetrated Deronda, made him feel the more that here was a crisis in which he must be firm.

"What my birth was does not lie in my will," he answered. "My sense of claims on me cannot be independent of my knowledge there. And I cannot promise you that I will try to hasten a disclosure.

Feelings which have struck root through half my life may still hinder me from doing what I have never yet been able to do. Everything must be waited for. I must know more of the truth about my own life, and I must know more of what it would become if it were made a part of yours."

Mordecai had folded his arms again while Deronda was speaking, and now answered with equal firmness, though with difficult breathing—

"You *shall* know. What are we met for, but that you should know? Your doubts lie as light as dust on my belief. I know the philosophies of this time and of other times: if I chose I could answer a summons before their tribunals. I could silence the beliefs which are the mother-tongue of my soul and speak with the rote-learned language of a system, that gives you the spelling of all things, sure of its alphabet covering them all. I could silence them: may not a man silence his awe or his love and take to finding reasons, which others demand? But if his love lies deeper than any reasons to be found? Man finds his pathways: at first they were foot-tracks, as those of the beast in the wilderness; now they are swift and invisible: his thought dives through the ocean, and his wishes thread the air: has he found all the pathways yet? What reaches him,

stays with him, rules him : he must accept it, not knowing its pathway. Say, my expectation of you has grown but as false hopes grow. That doubt is in your mind? Well, my expectation was there, and you are come. Men have died of thirst. But I was thirsty, and the water is on my lips. What are doubts to me? In the hour when you come to me and say, 'I reject your soul : I know that I am not a Jew : we have no lot in common'—I shall not doubt. I shall be certain—certain that I have been deluded. That hour will never come !”

Deronda felt a new chord sounding in this speech : it was rather imperious than appealing—had more of conscious power than of the yearning need which had acted as a beseeching grasp on him before. And usually, though he was the reverse of pugnacious, such a change of attitude towards him would have weakened his inclination to admit a claim. But here there was something that balanced his resistance and kept it aloof. This strong man whose gaze was sustainedly calm and his finger-nails pink with health, who was exercised in all questioning, and accused of excessive mental independence, still felt a subduing influence over him in the tenacious certitude of the fragile creature before him, whose

pallid yellow nostril was tense with effort as his breath laboured under the burthen of eager speech. The influence seemed to strengthen the bond of sympathetic obligation. In Deronda at this moment the desire to escape what might turn into a trying embarrassment was no more likely to determine action than the solicitations of indolence are likely to determine it in one with whom industry is a daily law. He answered simply—

“It is my wish to meet and satisfy your wishes wherever that is possible to me. It is certain to me at least that I desire not to undervalue your toil and your suffering. Let me know your thoughts. But where can we meet?”

“I have thought of that,” said Mordecai. “It is not hard for you to come into this neighbourhood later in the evening? You did so once.”

“I can manage it very well occasionally,” said Deronda. “You live under the same roof with the Cohens, I think?”

Before Mordecai could answer, Mr Ram re-entered to take his place behind the counter. He was an elderly son of Abraham, whose childhood had fallen on the evil times at the beginning of this century, and who remained amid this smart and instructed generation as a preserved specimen,

soaked through and through with the effect of the poverty and contempt which were the common heritage of most English Jews seventy years ago. He had none of the oily cheerfulness observable in Mr Cohen's aspect: his very features—broad and chubby—showed that tendency to look mongrel without due cause which, in a miscellaneous London neighbourhood, may perhaps be compared with the marvels of imitation in insects, and may have been nature's imperfect effort on behalf of the purer Caucasian to shield him from the shame and spitting to which purer features would have been exposed in the times of zeal. Mr Ram dealt ably in books in the same way that he would have dealt in tins of meat and other commodities—without knowledge or responsibility as to the proportion of rottenness or nourishment they might contain. But he believed in Mordecai's learning as something marvellous, and was not sorry that his conversation should be sought by a bookish gentleman, whose visits had twice ended in a purchase. He greeted Deronda with a crabbed goodwill, and, putting on large silver spectacles, appeared at once to abstract himself in the daily accounts.

But Deronda and Mordecai were soon in the street together, and, without any explicit agree-

ment as to their direction, were walking towards Ezra Cohen's.

"We can't meet there: my room is too narrow," said Mordecai, taking up the thread of talk where they had dropped it. "But there is a tavern not far from here where I sometimes go to a club. It is the *Hand and Banner*, in the street at the next turning, five doors down. We can have the parlour there any evening."

"We can try that for once," said Deronda. "But you will perhaps let me provide you with some lodging, which would give you more freedom and comfort than where you are."

"No; I need nothing. My outer life is as nought. I will take nothing less precious from you than your soul's brotherhood. I will think of nothing else yet. But I am glad you are rich. You did not need money on that diamond ring. You had some other motive for bringing it."

Deronda was a little startled by this clear-sightedness; but before he could reply, Mordecai added—"It is all one. Had you been in need of the money, the great end would have been that we should meet again. But you are rich?" he ended, in a tone of interrogation.

"Not rich, except in the sense that every one is rich who has more than he needs for himself."

"I desired that your life should be free," said Mordecai, dreamily—"mine has been a bondage."

It was clear that he had no interest in the fact of Deronda's appearance at the Cohens' beyond its relation to his own ideal purpose. Despairing of leading easily up to the question he wished to ask, Deronda determined to put it abruptly, and said—

"Can you tell me why Mrs Cohen, the mother, must not be spoken to about her daughter?"

There was no immediate answer, and he thought that he should have to repeat the question. The fact was that Mordecai had heard the words, but had to drag his mind to a new subject away from his passionate preoccupation. After a few moments, he replied, with a careful effort such as he would have used if he had been asked the road to Holborn—

"I know the reason. But I will not speak even of trivial family affairs which I have heard in the privacy of the family. I dwell in their tent as in a sanctuary. Their history, so far as they injure none other, is their own possession."

Deronda felt the blood mounting to his cheeks at a sort of rebuke he was little used to, and he also found himself painfully baffled where he had reckoned with some confidence on getting decisive

knowledge. He became the more conscious of emotional strain from the excitements of the day; and although he had the money in his pocket to redeem his ring, he recoiled from the further task of a visit to the Cohens', which must be made not only under the former uncertainty, but under a new disappointment as to the possibility of its removal.

"I will part from you now," he said, just before they could reach Cohen's door; and Mordecai paused, looking up at him with an anxious fatigued face under the gaslight.

"When will you come back?" he said, with slow emphasis.

"May I leave that unfixed? May I ask for you at the Cohens' any evening after your hour at the book-shop? There is no objection, I suppose, to their knowing that you and I meet in private?"

"None," said Mordecai. "But the days I wait now are longer than the years of my strength. Life shrinks: what was but a tithe is now the half. My hope abides in you."

"I will be faithful," said Deronda—he could not have left those words unuttered. "I will come the first evening I can after seven: on Saturday or Monday, if possible. Trust me."

He put out his ungloved hand. Mordecai, clasping it eagerly, seemed to feel a new instreaming of confidence, and he said with some recovered energy—"This is come to pass, and the rest will come."

That was their good-bye.

DANIEL DERONDA.

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